

Oct 30, 2010

David's Hope Mission/Vision/ Goals

**Our non-profit organization David's Hope was formed in April 2009. Our mission is to bring treatment rather than incarceration to individuals living with a mental illness. Arizona has one of the highest rates of incarceration of the mentally ill in the nation, being second only to the state of Nevada. In Arizona and across the United States, our jails and prisons have become our new asylums.**

**Our approach to this complex problem will require a multifaceted approach. Due to an extreme shortage of psychiatric treatment beds, many who require treatment are unable to get the help they need. Our goal is to educate the public regarding the urgent need for an increase in the number of psychiatric beds available to provide care for those who are in urgent need of ongoing mental health care.**

**David's Hope is a faith based entity which encourages participation of those from all faiths and religious backgrounds. The principle upon which we base our mission is the belief that all men are created equal and that mankind has been created in the image of God. We believe that even though an individual has been convicted of a crime, the public good is served not by treating that man as an animal but by offering him the opportunity to learn, grow, and heal through rehabilitative treatment opportunities.**

**Our goal is to restore justice to the administration of justice, through fair and reasonable consideration of an individual's mental condition and /or illness when a crime is committed by that person. We must assure these individuals do not present a threat to the public by committing them, when appropriate, to secure psychiatric hospitalization. In occasions when those individuals who have committed a crime due to uncontrolled or untreated symptoms of a mental illness are committed in a correctional setting, these inmates must be given the opportunity to undergo comprehensive psychiatric treatment.**

**Our criminal justice system most frequently cuts these mentally ill individuals off from appropriate mental health treatment. Through "forced plea deals" and mandatory minimum sentences, those who have technically violated the law due to their illness, are forced to accept responsibility for "willfully and intentionally" committing infractions of the law. In reality their only offense was to have had their mind fallen prey to the delusions and misperceptions created in their diseased mind by a very real, organic brain disease. We will work to increase the recognition and treatment of mental illness within our criminal justice system. Through education of those living with a mental illness, first responders, public defenders, prosecutors, judges, legislators and the general public; We are committed to bringing mental health treatment rather than incarceration to those afflicted with a mental disease.**

**For those persons with mental illness already incarcerated, we will advocate for recognition of their mental disease and demand humane and competent mental health treatment. We oppose the use of solitary confinement for all persons with mental illness. The use of this punitive and cruel type of incarceration is psychologically damaging for the sane as well as the sick. We will work to increase and promote the ability of clinicians in our jails and prisons to make accurate assessments of an inmate's mental condition. This will include the keeping of accurate statistics on the numbers of those being confined and outcomes of treatments for inmates with a diagnosable mental illness. Through education and advocacy, we hope to bring the recognition of mental illness fully into the public arena. Common sense impels us to treat a disease of the brain as equal to the treatment of any organ of the human body and decency demands it.**

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