



# IN-FOCUS NEWSLETTER

## SUMMER 2024



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## WORDS FROM OUR GRADUATES



*"This program changed my outlook on life and gave me the tools to be successful."*  
- Bret Dec 2023

*"I really appreciate that the program encompasses healing trauma outside of military service. I have not heard of a program doing this. Battlefield traumas cannot heal unless all wounds, pre and post service, are addressed. This program has truly been life changing. God Bless the members of this organization."*  
- Owen Dec 2023



*"This has given me the tools to make my life better. I feel like a weight has been lifted."*  
- Sarah March 2024

## Mess Night 2024 Update

Thank You to all who supported FOCUS Marines Foundation by sponsoring, donating silent auction items, or attending Mess Night 2024. Our guests were treated to some of our favorite Marine Corps Mess Night traditions as well as a healthy dose of Marine Corps antics. Without a doubt, though, the best part of the night was getting to hear from the special guest speakers, our very own program Graduates. Mark your calendar and plan to attend Mess Night next year, April 12, 2025, at the beautiful Sunset Country Club in Sunset Hills, MO.



# Volunteer Spotlight

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE



*Dennis and Dee Simpson*

Most of you know him - FOCUS Marines Foundation's Chairman of the Board, Dennis Simpson. Dennis has been making a difference at FOCUS Marines Foundation for over 11 years. He first served as a Team Leader offering support to Marines going through the FOCUS program. He then joined the FOCUS Board of Directors and eventually served as President of FOCUS. Currently, Dennis serves as Chairman of the Board of Directors, and we are incredibly thankful for his dedication and commitment to our organization and the veterans we serve.

Dennis undoubtedly has had a great impact on this organization. However, he was no stranger to making a difference in people's lives before his involvement with FOCUS. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps from March 1977 until July 1981 as a Military Police Officer and Drill Instructor. After his discharge, Dennis worked his way up through the United States Postal Service while earning his bachelor's degree from St. Louis University. He ultimately became the Team Leader U.S. Postal Inspector Supervisor, conducting multi-agency investigations as a Subject Matter Expert in Workplace Violence Prevention and Investigation, Fraud, and Identity Theft. His work led to award-winning federal prosecutions of organized criminal enterprises. Dennis also developed procedures and guidelines to protect the USPS from attacks, safeguarding its assets and ensuring successful prosecutions of criminals. He made a difference both in the organization and in bringing justice to those who attacked it.

Dennis's drive to make a difference led him to work for Engility Corporation, providing expertise to the United States Armed Forces. As a Senior Law Enforcement Professional embedded with the Joint Special Operations Command in Iraq and the 1st Infantry Division in Afghanistan, he trained senior military officials in Iraq and Afghanistan in investigative and prosecution techniques for terrorists and military criminals. His work made a significant impact in both countries.

Despite his demanding career, Dennis found time to marry his wife, Dee, and together they raised two sons, David and Sean. As his sons grew up, Dennis made a difference by supporting the Honor Flight Program alongside his son, David, and attending all of Sean's college soccer games, regardless of the location. He taught his boys that "What's right is right and what's wrong is wrong," never compromising on his morals. Dennis believes that anyone can achieve anything with hard work, a lesson he lives by, having competed in the Marine Corps Marathon 13.1 race twice.

Dennis has always served others throughout his life, knowing he could make a difference and using his skills and talents to benefit those around him. Despite his many contributions, Dennis remains humble and avoids the spotlight. However, there is one exception - his five grandchildren, two boys and three girls, who have brought out a side of Dennis no one has seen before. Now, Dennis also makes a difference as a devoted Pawpaw.

# Stockhausen's Point



During the March 2022 FOCUS Session, Stockhausen's Point was added to the FOCUS Program. It started with a conversation between Participants and Mentors about a concept fundamental to the FOCUS Program, "dropping your rucksack." The idea is that in order to heal and move forward in your life, you have to be willing to let go of the weight of whatever is holding you back. During this conversation, a participant suggested that it could be quite powerful if there was a place where program participants could write down whatever they need to let go of, drop it, and walk away. Before the week ended, such a place was created.

Stockhausen's Point now gives participants a place to both figuratively and literally set down their rucksack. A slightly secluded area off the walking path provides a serene place for participants to write their burdens on large stones and, when they are ready, drop them in a well and walk away. This area was named in memory of USMC Sgt. Charles Stockhausen, a former FOCUS guest speaker who served in WWII and the Korean War. Sgt. Stockhausen was well known for his stories, including the one where, long ago, after he was discharged from service, he spent a lot of time walking the very land where the FOCUS program is held in order to "drop his own rucksack" and move forward.



Sgt. Charles Stockhausen

## ALWAYS IMPROVING

Over the past 14 years, the heart of the FOCUS program may have remained the same, but there have been many other changes made. We realized early on that regularly evaluating the program would be important for ensuring its effectiveness. Therefore, every session has always been meticulously reviewed by program staff to identify areas we can improve upon. In addition, we rely on the invaluable feedback we receive from our participants after every class to help us determine what works, what doesn't, and what changes may need to be made. Everyone is encouraged to share comments, experiences, and suggestions for making this the best and most effective experience for our fellow veterans. This information is used to implement changes, both big and small. In almost every session, adjustments are made as a direct result of this feedback, including but not limited to updates to procedures, food menus, schedule changes, supplies, and additions or deletions of course content. Whether the suggestions are minor, such as supply requests, or more substantial, like course content, they are all taken seriously and considered to ensure the program remains the best and most effective experience possible.

Some examples of changes that have been implemented include:

Creating Stockhausen's Point  
 Removing Employment Coaching  
 Adding Graduate Mentoring

Adding Sunday Activities  
 Adding Relationships Class  
 Adding Monthly Re-FOCUS class

Starting Caregiver Program  
 Adding Yoga / Workouts  
 Removing Dog Training



FOCUS Graduate Mentors



# How to Attend FOCUS

Do you know a veteran who may be interested in attending a FOCUS program?

The first step is filling out a short online application. It takes less than 5 minutes to complete!

Go to [www.focusmarines.org](http://www.focusmarines.org) and click **APPLY NOW**. Once you have completed the application, our Executive Director, Jennifer Jefferson, will call to discuss the next steps.

## Upcoming Events

### June 2024

- 6 - Buddy Check
- 7 - MCL MO Convention
- 11 - Re-FOCUS
- 18 - Re-FOCUS

### July 2024

- 2 - Buddy Check
- 4 - Fair St. Louis
- 5 - Riverfest
- 9 - Re-FOCUS
- 16 - Re-FOCUS
- 26 - Mental Health Awareness Expo

### August 2024

- 1 - Buddy Check
- 7 - America's Warrior Partnership
- 13 - Re-FOCUS
- 20 - Re-FOCUS

### September 2024

- 5 - Buddy Check
- 7 - 22 Strong Walk
- 8 - Kayak for a Vet
- 10 - Re-FOCUS
- 11 - Marc Cox Morning Show
- 11 - Veterans' Mental Health Conference
- 14 - FOCUS Course
- 27 - Vets Rolling Smoke & BBQ Competition

### October 2024

- 3 - Buddy Check
- 8 - Re-FOCUS
- 15 - Re-FOCUS

### November 2024

- 7 - Buddy Check
- 12 - Re-FOCUS
- 16 - FOCUS Course

**\*Schedule Change\***  
December class has been moved to November!



STAY IN TOUCH WITH US!

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