

Update from Travis & Brandi Akins

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Ministry to First Responders and Their Families



Serving Those Who Serve Us



MINISTRY UPDATE

This month has been an incredibly busy month of ministry. I visited with 20 FBI Agents and staff in Wyoming and shared different ways that we can support them and building relationships. It was a huge opportunity that everyone was grateful for and encouraged by. We were also privileged to share about

chaplain programs with our help. A few agencies in attendance are agencies we have been pursuing over the past couple of years. Please pray that these agencies, and others, see the value in caring for their officers/staff and allow us to support them in a greater way.

Throughout the month there have been many meetings, lunches, coffees, and get togethers to talk about many things going on in the lives of those God has put in my life. This is one area of my responsibilities that I love and also brings me to my knees in prayer. Increasingly, in addition to the law enforcement personnel, chaplains and community leaders have come to me as they process the circumstances of their life and the world we live in. It is an honor and privilege to walk with these individuals and I ask for your continued prayer and the Lord's guidance in all wisdom/comfort.

Lastly, yesterday we wrapped up a conference with the Navigators to train, equip, and encourage First Responders/Chaplains on making Disciple Makers. This follows our Great Commandment in Matthew 28. It was a great time away of teaching, reflection, and rest for those in attendance. It was my honor to lead 16 godly men and women from the Colorado front range through our time together. Please pray for these leaders and all those that God will call them to intentionally invest in.

As you can imagine, ministry does not stop. While I was away at the Navigators Conference, many of you read of the Commerce City Officer who was killed in a [traffic accident](#). One of our chaplains was able to respond and assist with the tragedy. Please be in prayer for all those involved.



In This Family, No One Should Fight Alone

Below is an article excerpt from The POST Dispatch. [Click here for the full article](#). This gives a good explanation of the dangers our LE Community faces internally. In my time as a Deputy and Chaplain, I have experienced seven suicides, with the concern of more. Please pray for our LE Community.

than to any other cause. We can no longer just accept these losses. There remains a stubborn stigma within our profession that seeking out help will end a peace officer's career. That seeking out help will inevitably result in being passed over for advancement. That seeking out help means one can no longer be a peace officer. How do we overcome this cultural belief and let our peace officers know, in no uncertain terms, that when we say it is safe for them to seek help, we aren't just speaking hollow words?

From the POST Director Bourgerie's story, Many people who know me don't know that I have skull tattoos covering the right side of my body, each one representing an influential friend or family member that I have lost. Twenty-five in total, all telling a story, with three more to add. A number of these I lost to suicide. The first skull represents my grandfather, who killed himself exactly one year to the day before I was born, with my birthday being the constant reminder to my family of his suicide. The second, my father, who completed suicide two weeks before my tenth birthday. A fellow Scout in my Troop. Another, a fellow deputy. A Probation Supervisor I worked closely with. These suicides greatly impacted me, and I can honestly say that not a day passes where I don't think of them. And I cannot possibly overstate their negative impact on my life, and mental health.

As friends have experienced surviving a loved one's suicide, I have tried to help them through the struggles that I have also endured. Each of them experiencing what I have come to think of as the "insidious contagion of suicidal ideation." The darkness enveloping them, drawing them in to suicidal ideation, depression, and despair. Suicide doesn't just impact the individual. The ripple of that particular stone cast in the pond of life is wide ranging and no one close is immune to the effects.

I have struggled and fought against this darkness, and its companion depression, for my entire life. Fighting against the draw of suicidal ideation has been a consistent struggle for me. And I admit to a variety of unhealthy coping mechanisms over the years. But I found the strength to seek the help that I deserved. I didn't believe that I was deserving of help for much of my lifetime, but finally realized that I was. I started off using EAP, but kept it a secret from my agency, out of fear of the adverse impacts it would have on my livelihood and my career.

made. And it is likely the only reason I can share my story today. Like many, or most, of you, I have always seen myself as a strong person. I have experienced innumerable challenges in my lifetime and didn't need anyone's help in confronting and overcoming them. Although afraid at times, I found the intestinal fortitude to put myself between danger and my community, just like what you all do daily. Yet, I know I only had so much internal strength to fight this battle and that it would eventually wear out, leaving me to the same fate as my father and grandfather.

There is honor in admitting that we can't always do it by ourselves and knowing when we need assistance. We must all do better. We lose too many of our brothers and sisters to suicide. Agencies have a moral obligation to support their peace officers, especially when they struggle. What peace officers are expected to deal with daily would shock and horrify the members of our communities, yet, as a profession, we have historically told our peace officers the equivalent of "rub some dirt in it" and "walk it off." I am here to say that is no longer acceptable. When you see a fellow peace officer struggling, do something. Don't walk away and leave them to cope on their own. Talk to them. Confront them. Guide them towards resources. Report them to their chain of command if you must, but save their lives. If you need help, get it. If a buddy needs help, help them get it. No one in our family should have to fight this fight on their own.

It is ok to not be ok. But it's not ok to not seek the help you need and deserve.



ROCKY MOUNTAIN POLICE CHAPLAINS

If you want to get caught up on on that has been going on with RMPC, [here is a link to our past RMPC News Updates.](#)



We continue to engage with the Law Enforcement community by participating in events and equipping Chaplains. Here are a few things coming up to pray over:

- Marriage Mondays in Oct & Nov
- Responding to Your Relationships in Oct & Nov
- **Advancing Warrior Tribe Groups** - Multiple groups starting in Sept and Oct
- **REAL Essentials Respond Certification** - Oct 29 - 30
- **First Responders Fall Marriage Retreat** - Nov 7
- **2021 RMPC Annual Meeting** - Feb 4

If you would like to join our prayer and financial team,
please click on the link below.

[Join Team Akins](#)

[Click here for past Newsletters.](#)

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