



Vanguard Pitches Success Stories at Annual Meeting

by **SCOTT McCaffrey, Staff Writer**

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Alcohol and drug abuse. Depression. A suicide attempt. Failed stints in rehab. All by the age of 17.

That marked the first half of Brendan King's 34 years. The second half: Working at a rehabilitation center, joining the Marine Corps and serving an eight-year stint that included service in Iraq, establishing his own consulting firm and being a road-patrol officer and SWAT team member in the Fauquier County Sheriff's Office.

What turned his life around? King says it was a stint at Recovery Lodge, a residential-treatment program of Vanguard Services Unlimited targeting troubled adolescents, that worked when other efforts had failed.

"I grew up not believing in my heart that I was unconditionally loved and unconditionally accepted," King said at Vanguard's annual Discover Vanguard Breakfast, held May 1 at Washington Golf & Country Club. "If you're missing those, you're headed for trouble."

"The people that work at Vanguard saved my life, absolutely," King said. "They believe in what they're doing."

The event brought together more than 100 community leaders, who heard retired U.S. Army Gen. Barry McCaffrey - a longtime Vanguard supporter - press for more funding for treatment programs.

McCaffrey said that while 23 million Americans have chronic substance-abuse problems (about one out of every 13 people), only about 4 million

have access to science-based treatment programs, such as Vanguard.

"All of us, collectively, have to understand this is our problem," said McCaffrey, who served as director of the White House Office of National Drug Policy Control and now heads an Arlington-based consulting firm. "My job is to hold up a mirror to American society."

Since being founded in a local church basement in 1962, Vanguard Services Unlimited has served more than 35,000 people.

"All of these folks are miracles," said Debby Taylor, Vanguard's CEO. "So many remain successful for many years . . . it takes a lot of hard work, but it can be done."

A declining economy usually leads to a spike in depression and the use of alcohol and drugs, which in turn puts stress on the entire network of treatment, all at a time when government funding may be in peril.

It is shortsighted to take funds away from programs that deal with addiction, Taylor said.

"Treatment works," she said. "The benefits are too numerous to count."

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