## Associate Facilitators:

### Scott Bennion, MDiv, BCSC, WHC

*is a Board-Certified Spiritual Guide, a Health and Wellness Coach, and an ordained minister. He served in the military for 13 years and serves as a Chaplain at the Phoenix VA Medical Center and cofounded Interface 4 Wellness, an inter-spiritual wellness practice specializing in relationships, sexuality, and spirituality. Scott's participation is supported by the Phoenix VA Chaplain Service.*

### Joel Larson, MDiv, MAHS, BCC

*is Aurora Behavioral Health System's Manager of Chaplain Services. He retired from the Arizona National Guard as the Senior Chaplain Assistant after serving for 20 years, including a deployment to Mosul, Iraq. Joel has worked as a mobile crisis therapist for EMPACT-SPC and also facilitates the Crosier Community's veteran healing program called CrossWalk.*

### Graciela Marroquin, BA, MSW

*served 14 years as a plane captain in the U.S. Navy before transferring into the Army National Guard and was then deployed to Baghdad, Iraq as a combat-medic. Graciela is currently pursuing her doctoral degree in clinical psychology with an emphasis on trauma, stress, resiliency, and moral conflict/injury. She is a Facilitator for the Healing of Memories Workshop for Veterans and a Facilitator for our St. Francis retreats for veterans.*

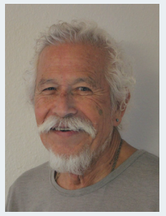
### Gene Meiergerd BSN, MSN, MC, CSD

*served as a Medic in the U.S. Army in Vietnam, followed by 18 years as a USAF nurse with multiple deployments around the world. He has a Masters in Counseling, is a massage therapist and is certified as a Spiritual Director. Gene is drawn toward spiritual aspects of healing with a special interest in helping veterans and those wrestling with grief and provides Spiritual Direction for our St. Francis retreats.*

### Chris Melvin, BS, MDiv

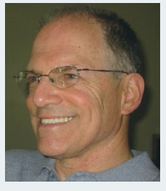
*has served in USAF and the U.S. Army for the past 24 years and now serves as a Senior Army Chaplain with the Arizona Army National Guard. He has been deployed on two combat tours to Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa as an Army Chaplain. Chris is a graduate of the Mental Health Integration for Chaplain Services (MHICS) VA/DoD program and is actively involved in relationship retreats, counseling, as well as Moral Injury and PTS work.*

### José Olagues, BA, MBA, MDiv



*served in the U.S. Army as an Administration Instructor. He finished his BA and spent his early years teaching high school, then received an MBA and worked in the corporate world. He later obtained a Master's degree in Divinity and became an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church-U.S.A. He is also a Facilitator for the Healing of Memories Workshop for Veterans.*

### Steve Wales, BS, MC, LPC, RYT-500



*served as an Officer in the U.S. Navy from 1962 to 1965 on a destroyer based at Pearl Harbor. He is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Yoga Instructor, Certified Sound Healer and Yoga Nidra Facilitator. He worked with veterans at MANA House for many years. He also volunteers at the Counseling Ministry at the Franciscan Renewal Center and is a member of their Casa Veterans Ministry.*

The purpose of the Casa Veterans Ministry is to respond to the spiritual and emotional needs of service members, veterans and their families offering a welcoming and compassionate environment.

**Franciscan Renewal Center**
Peace. Renewal. Good.

Nestled in the lush desert valley at the base of Camelback Mountain in Scottsdale, Arizona, the Franciscan Renewal Center (also known as "The Casa") is a unique and engaging venue. Withcomforablesleeping accommodations, flexible meeting spaces, and exceptional food, the Casa nourishes the body, inspires the mind and soothes the spirit. For over 60 years, the Franciscan Renewal Center has been renewing lives through spiritual growth, healing and transformation, and serving others.

5802 East Lincoln Drive
Scottsdale, Arizona 85253

480.948.7460 phone
800.356.3247 toll free

**thecasa.org**

All Are Welcome

Franciscan Renewal Center

**The Casa Veterans Ministry at the Franciscan Renewal Center has been vetted and approved by the Arizona Coalition for Military Families and received the Copper Eagle Award from the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame Society in 2019 for its efforts to help our veterans heal from their wounds of service.**

# Building Spiritual Strength:

*A Program for U.S. Service Members and Veterans*

## April - May 2021

Franciscan Renewal Center
5802 East Lincoln Drive
Scottsdale, Arizona 85253

**"I just wanted to tell you how meaningful this workshop has been to me. The material was powerful, but it was also your leadership that took it to a much deeper level."**

**Franciscan Renewal Center**
Peace. Renewal. Good.

## What is Building Spiritual Strength?

*Building Spiritual Strength* is an eight (8) week integrated group process led by trained facilitators designed to support veterans and active-duty service members as they explore their spirituality in a safe, non-judgmental, ecumenical manner.

*Building Spiritual Strength* has been found to be helpful for veterans and service members, many of whom come from a variety of faith backgrounds and who may suffer from moral injury or spiritual distress. Many may have wandered in and out of various spiritual practices, or may be interested, or are being moved, to explore their spirituality more fully.

## Who Should Attend?

*Building Spiritual Strength* is open to any Arizona or New Mexico veterans or active-duty service members who have been referred to us by a peer counselor, mental health professional from a Vet Center located in Arizona or New Mexico, VA psychologist or social worker, or have been referred to us by a military chaplain.

In addition, potential applicants will engage in a phone interview with a mental health professional to determine their suitability for the program. This screen will include a review on one's current PTSD status, medication review, substance use review, safety concerns and ability to socially interact appropriately in a group setting.

It is helpful (but not required) if one has already attended a healing retreat or veteran wellness program similar to those offered at the Franciscan Renewal Center in Scottsdale, AZ, the Spirit of the Desert Retreat Center in Carefree, Arizona or the National Veterans Wellness and Healing Center in Angel Fire, NM, or one has participated in a program such as Honor House or Veterans First in Phoenix, AZ.

## Empirically Supported and Sanctioned by the Veterans Administration and the Department of Defense.

*Building Spiritual Strength* is an empirically supported program developed by Dr. Irene Harris, Ph.D., L.P. and Rev. Tim Usset, MDiv, MPH at the Minneapolis VA Health Care System. *Building Spiritual Strength* is in use by the Veterans Administration, Vet Centers, and the Department of Defense.

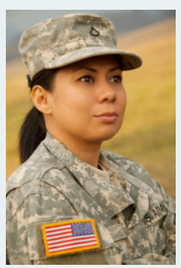
The program has been slightly modified, with the authors' approval, for an on-line delivery by the Casa Veterans Ministry at the Franciscan Renewal Center in Scottsdale, Arizona in the Spring of 2021.

## General Information

The program is FREE of charge. Three groups will meet two (2) hours each week for eight (8) weeks starting the first week of April through the fourth weejk of May 2021. Sessions will be offered on Mondays from 6-8 pm, Thursdays from 1-3 pm or Thursdays from 6-8 pm.

Participation at **all** sessions is required, along with completion of weekly assignments. Each group will be composed of 4 to 6 veterans or service members and accompanied by two facilitators, a mental health professional, and a clergy, spiritual director or military chaplain.

Sessions are conducted on-line using a computer, laptop or tablet. A strong internet connection is a **MUST** (cell phone use not recommended). Sessions will be conducted using both audio and video via Zoom.



**"I cannot be more appreciative. The course helped me achieve goals that I was not able to accomplish myself for 6 or 7 years. I could not get results.**

**THANK YOU!"**

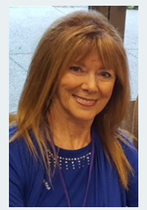
## To Register

To register, or for more information, please contact Linda MacLeish BS, MC, LPC, RYT, at macleishlinda@gmail.com. The DEADLINE to register is **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2021.**

**Please note: This program is not psychotherapy, nor is it suitable for those who may be seeking therapy for their wounds of war.**

## Lead Facilitator:

### Linda MacLeish, BS, MC, LPC, RYT



*is a Licensed Professional Counselor and Yoga Instructor. She has been involved in the treatment of trauma using mind-body-spirit approaches for many years. She is a member of the Casa Veterans Ministry, the Casa Counseling Ministry, and created/coordinates several veteran retreats and workshops. She was raised in a military family, was a military wife and is able to integrate those experiences into her work.*