

SWEETHEARTS & HEROES

in partnership with

BUCKINGHAM

BUCK

1896

presents



THE **AWIRE**

A Circle Prevention System for
IBEW Locals & Industrial Contractors

The background is a solid orange color with a subtle network pattern of thin, light-orange lines connecting various circular nodes of different sizes. The nodes are scattered across the entire background, creating a sense of interconnectedness.

OUR WORK

THE WAR ON HOPELESSNESS

We are perhaps living among the most hopeless generations humanity has ever known, and make no mistake: **IT IS** a **WAR**. Individuals are living in more **hopeless** and **persistent states of sadness** at alarming paces. Suicidal attempts, along with anxious and depressive feelings, are on the rise.

The **general** suicide rate is



PER 100,000
including our children.



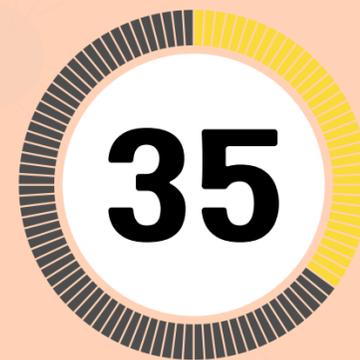
The **armed** forces loses



PER DAY
to their own hands.



The **Marines** lead this at



PER 100,000
lost to hopelessness.



But the scariest is in the **world of construction** at



PER 100,000
taken every year to suicide.



AS HOPELESS AS THEY COME

The most devastating battle seems to be raging in the hearts and minds of those who keep our nation running. In the construction and extraction industries, **mental health has become the leading health risk**, surpassing physical dangers such as heavy

equipment, electrical hazards, and falls. From carpenters and electricians, to inside and outside electrical workers, to line clearance tree trimming and many more — those in these industries are reported to be **5x more likely to die by their own hands than from OSHA's fatal four.**

I wasn't aware of how big an issue [suicide] was in the trades... Tom and Rick raised awareness around the need for community, purpose and belonging among tradesman and women...

Kaleb Ward, Safety Manager, NOOTER Construction



TAKING CARE OF THE 5TH WIRE



Every line has its wires, just like every crew has it's members.

In this industry, **safety from personal injury is number one.**

But there's one "wire" we've left out of the equation.

It's the wire within each of us...

We call it **the 5th wire.**

**READ THE
ARTICLE >>>**

 **substack** 

THE 5TH WIRE

SWEETHEARTS & HEROES

Sweethearts & Heroes is a seasoned team with 15+ years of experience in implementing practices and philosophies that boost "Human Skills," such as empathy and trust, while building cultures of belonging around positive leadership.

TOM MURPHY

Founder, Sweethearts & Heroes

All-American Wrestler

Retired UFC Fighter

Corporate Executive (Rail America)

National Keynote Speaker

Business Entrepreneur



5TH
WIRE
WEBPAGE

SEE OUR WORK



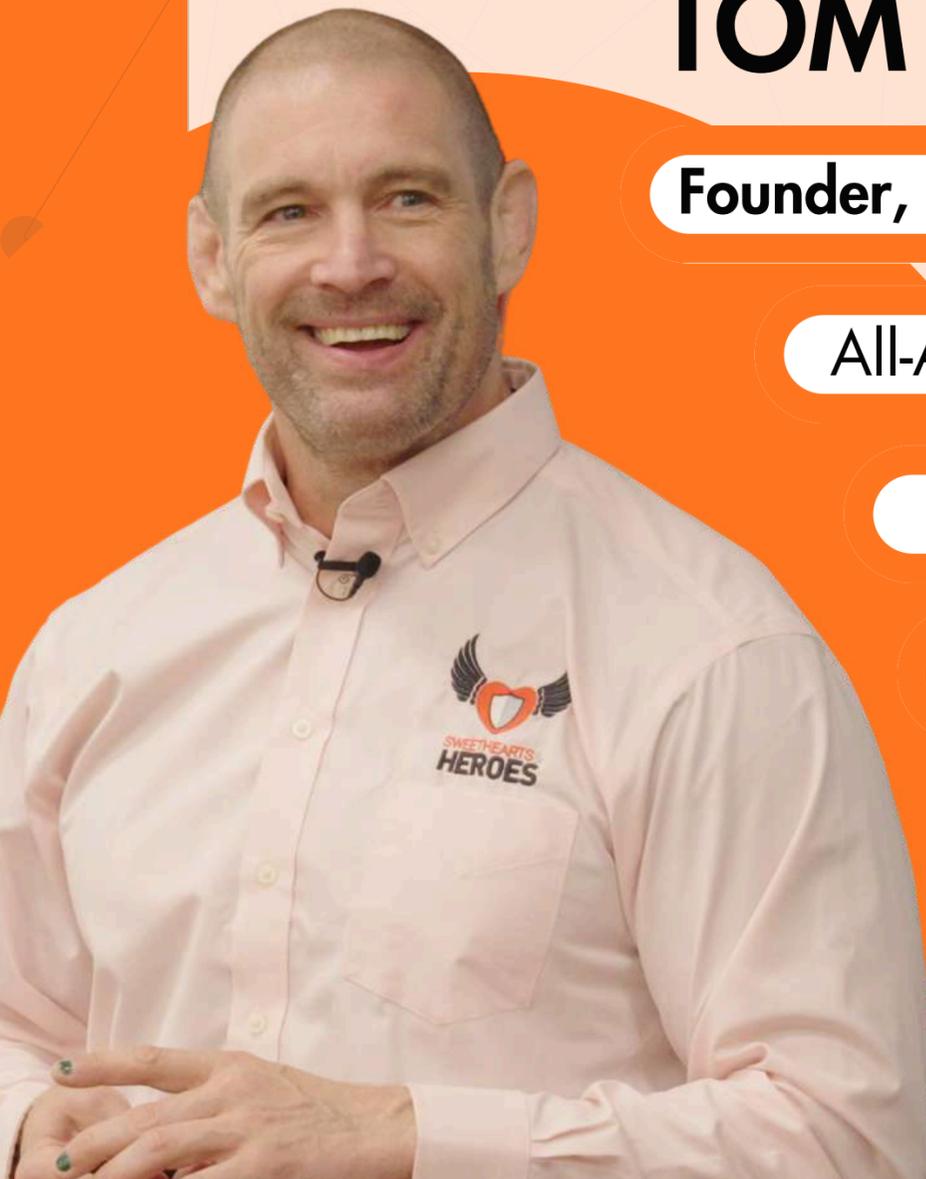
SEE OUR IMPACT



SEE OUR PARTNERS



LEARN MORE HERE



WHAT WE DO

We've empowered over 2 million students, educators, service members, athletes, and professionals across the country. We build community through peer support networks and healthy norms to tackle issues like hopelessness and destructive decisions.

CHAD ALTHISER

Sweethearts & Heroes Circle Liaison

Retired U.S. Marine Corps Major

3x Combat Vetarn & Medal w/Valor

Ironman & Leademan Finisher

Leftwich Trophy Nominee

Semper Fi Odyssey Team Leader

RICK YAROSH

Co-Founder, Sweethearts & Heroes

Retired U.S. Army Sergeant

Purple Heart Recipient

Motivational Speaker

National Keynote Speaker

Resilience & HOPE Expert



OUR VISION

To create an upstream prevention system that replaces today's reactive approaches to the mounting destructive decisions in the trades. We aim to cultivate a culture rooted in belonging and brotherhood — one that fosters hope and trust through meaningful connections and relationships. We envision a future in which those in the construction trades support one another with strength and integrity, no longer dependent on intervention but upheld by one another before a crisis occurs.

OUR MISSION

We are our brother's keeper. Each day, we commit to embracing the friction of growth by sharpening the brothers and sisters to our left and right, just as we receive their sharpening in return. Through integrity, accountability, and humility, we'll forge an unbreakable brotherhood that embodies the truth that the greatest love is to give of ourselves for our brothers. Together, we are the answer, carrying the strength and hope that prevent despair.

OUR FORMAT

The crux of our program uses our Circle formats (FLASH & Round Table), creating a space where every participant's voice is equal, an optimal format for building trust and open dialogue. Combining your existing safety protocols with our human connection practice, these sessions bring teams together to confront challenges, sharpen one another, and strengthen bonds of brotherhood. With this format, we cultivate meaningful connections, reinforce integrity, and create a culture where support and prevention happen naturally, before crises arise.

UPSTREAM PREVENTION

Just as we train, equip, inspect, and test our gear and safety procedures to prevent physical injuries, **we need proactive strategies and tools to protect the mental health and safety of our linemen.**

We've developed an "upstream prevention" systems to ensure individuals have the necessary tools, resources, and support structures in place to counteract the thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that can lead to destructive decisions.



Upstream programs aim to address the root causes or risk factors before problems manifest.

Downstream interventions focus on treating or managing problems once they already occurred.

THE POWER OF BELONING

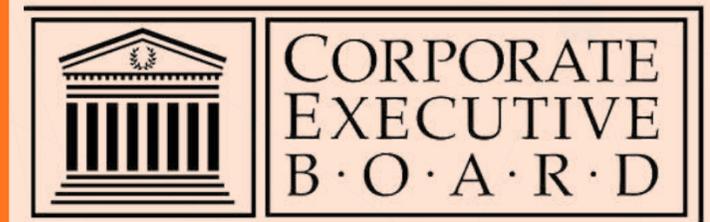
“When people feel like they belong at work, they are more productive, motivated, engaged and **3.5 times more likely to contribute** to their fullest potential, according to our research at the Center for Talent Innovation.”

**Harvard
Business
Review**

Forbes

“A Towers Watson study concludes that companies with **highly effective communication practices enjoy 47% higher total returns** to shareholders compared with the firms that are least effective at communicating.”

“Those employees who are most committed perform **20% better** and are **87% less likely to leave the organization** - indicating the significance of engagement to organizational performance.”



NETWORKS OF SUPPORT

For nearly two decades, Sweethearts & Heroes has addressed these issues by empowering conversations, activating empathy, and building peer support networks that cultivate a culture of belonging while boosting readiness and resilience.

...[Circle was] probably the most moving 45 minutes of my adult life after the marriage to my wife and the birth of my children... Can't say enough of what it has made me reflect on in my life and how to be a better human being and listen to others!!

John M. Dean, Regional Risk Manager Northline Utilities, LLC

By establishing healthy social norms focused on help-seeking behaviors and leveraging collective strengths within your team, we create cultures that mitigate mental health challenges like depression, suicide, and substance abuse.



*When team members feel valued and like they belong, it naturally enhances job satisfaction and improves retention. **For every dollar invested in efforts supporting employee emotional and social intelligence, there is an \$11 return.***



A CIRCLE CULTURE



The Circle format is one of history's oldest human connections and community-building practices, stretching back over 400,000 years. It helps individuals and communities foster a sense of belonging and purpose, establish positive social norms, build networks of support, and develop critical human skills for personal and collective well-being.

Read the Article!



What is Circle?



“How” of Circle



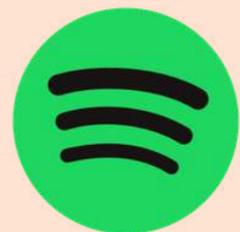
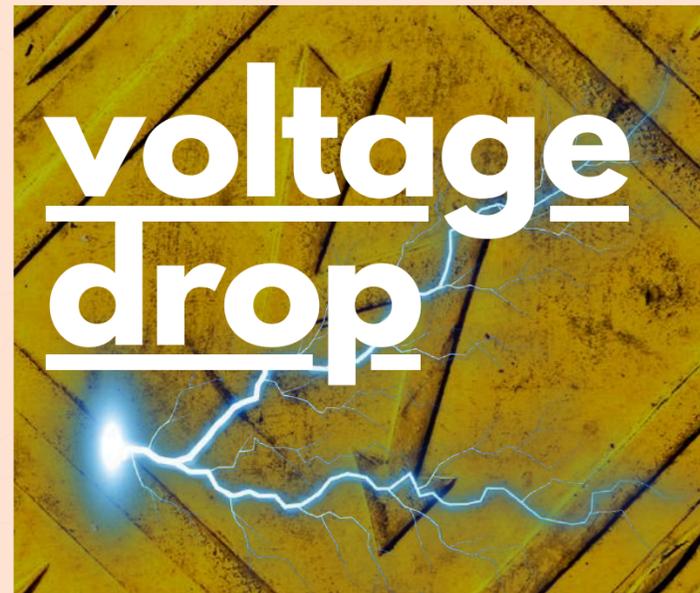
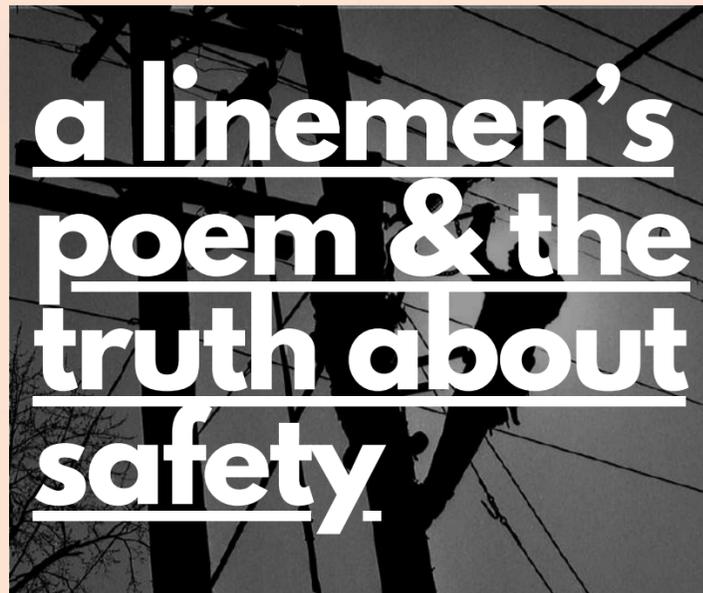
“Why” of Circle



It was eye-opening to sit with a group of men in a circle, and be able to be open and transparent, to be raw and share things with a human that I normally would not share...

Rob McKinney, Construction Safety Advocate, SALUS

WANT TO LEARN MORE?



OUR PROGRAM

OUR PROGRAM



IGNITION

Our work begins with an ***electrifying 90-120 minute keynote event*** where we establish the **War on Hopelessness** and how we solve this issue.

This event will jumpstart your organization's awareness around the destructive decisions being made in the trades, as well as introduce you to our FLASH Circle system built around human connection.

You'll also receive this message in digital format with our foundational ***5th Wire HOPE Series*** assets to integrate into your existing LMS, along with a yearlong subscription to our ***5th Wire Online Platform*** to introduce this message to future employees.



Watch our Sizzle Reel!



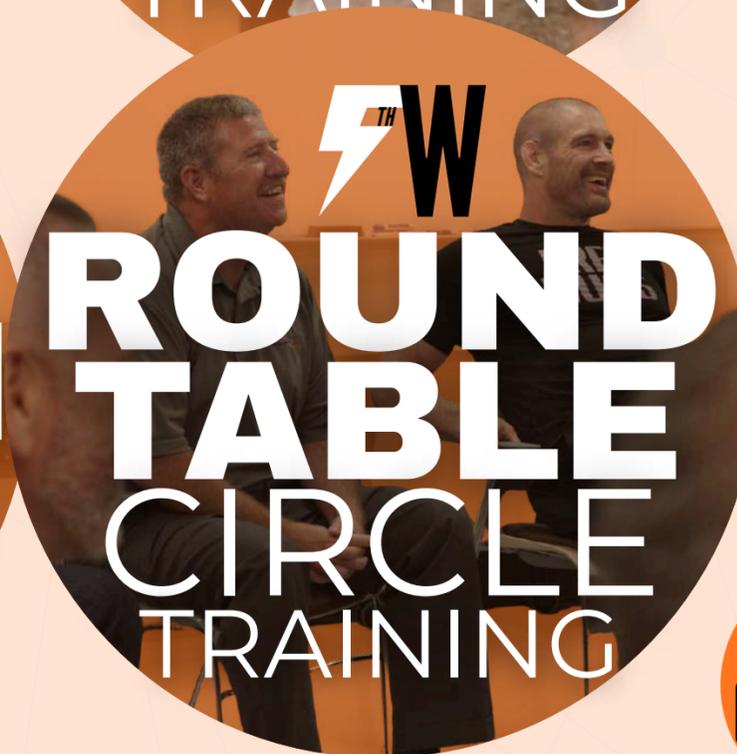
THE **TH** WIRE

SWEETHEARTS & HEROES

PLATFORM

**ONBOARDING AND
TRAINING COURSES INCLUDE:**

[> LEARN MORE](#)

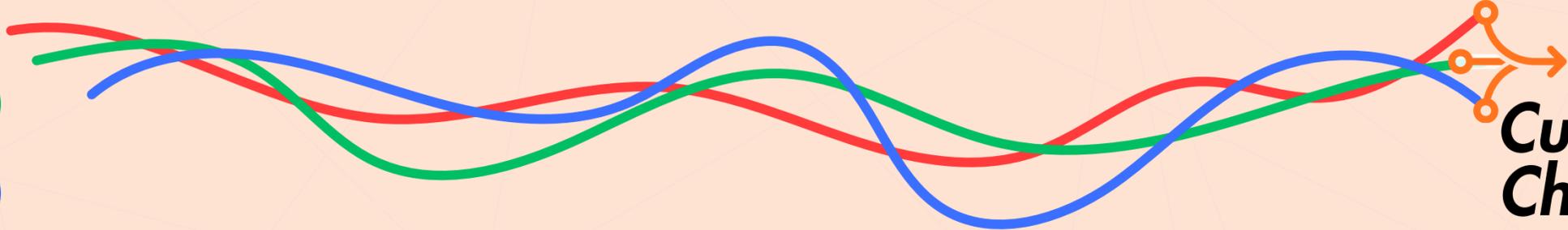


APPRENTICE *vs* JOURNEYMAN

Our **apprentice program** focuses on **establishing the habit and system of Round Table Circle discussions**. This is the foundation for changing the culture and the next evolution of the journeyman. Our goal is to **create the linemen of the future** who are 5-10 years away from running the job, leading the crew, and shaping the culture.

Our **journeyman program** focuses on running **FLASH Circles & finding the gatekeepers** within your organization by going into the field and working with your contractors. Here, we'll also **work through real-life situations** that involve things like leadership, life and character skills, and personal challenges such as parenting, spousal and family relationships, and so forth.

Apprentice Program
Journeyman Program
Management Training



Cultural Change

OUR APPRENTICE PROGRAM

After ignition, our apprentice program follows the following process:

PHASE 1

6-to-8-Month "Round Table" Program (1-to-2-hour, community-building Circles once a month) + Identifying Trainer and Apprentice "Gatekeepers"

PHASE 3

During the remainder of an apprenticeship, every training or class day should begin with a FLASH Circle + Recommend "Gatekeepers," those trained in Circle, and any others interested, join a Round Table Circle with newer apprentices or each other periodically

PHASE 2

Immediately after the "Round Table" Program, Instructors and/or Apprentice "Gatekeepers" are trained in FLASH Circle and/or Round Table Circle Facilitation (enabling them to run Circle)

PHASE 4

Instructors and/or Apprentice "Gatekeepers" with 20+ facilitated Circles to attend a Train the Trainer Circle Facilitation Training, enabling them to train future Apprentices, Instructors, and/or Contractors in Circle Facilitation, and become administrators of Phase 1

All apprentices who top out and complete Phase 4, we highly encourage them to return regularly to the Union Hall and participate and/or facilitate Round Table Circles with new apprentices

OUR JOURNEYMAN PROGRAM

After ignition, our journeyman program follows the following process:

PHASE 1

After Ignition, we highly recommend a 6-to-8-Month "Round Table" Program (1-to-2-hour, community-building Circles once a month) — this can be facilitated by S&H or facilitators from the Union Hall who have undergone Circle Training

PHASE 2

After training, we highly recommend at minimum a weekly FLASH Circle tied to your safety briefings, with an additional recommendation of a monthly or quarterly Round Table Circle

PHASE 1A

Depending on where you want to go, we recommend training your GFs, Safety Professionals, and Journeyman "Gatekeepers" in FLASH Circle and/or Round Table Circle Facilitation

PHASE 3

For GFs, "Gatekeepers," and Safety Professionals with 20+ facilitated Circles, we recommend having them attend a Train the Trainer Circle Facilitation Training at the Union Hall to perpetuate the practice of Circle inside your company independently

The 5th Wire Platform will include online training courses and additional resources to help improve the skills of Circle Facilitators and provide key human discussions tied to safety concepts for sustained practice

OPTION #1 (RECOMMENDED)

Sweethearts & Heroes Full Implementation | After our ignition event, we'll return for 6-8 in-person visits where we'll run our full culture-changing Round Table Circle Program. During this process, we'll:



Run a monthly series of Circles with your members



Instruct your leadership in segments as we progress



Help identify and build your internal Circle team

Sweethearts & Heroes Circle Training | As we transition to handing implementation over to your foremen, management, and gatekeepers, we'll conduct training on our Round Table and FLASH Circle processes.

While union halls can continue our Round Table Circle practices, our FLASH Circle process is a distinct practice designed to merge with existing safety briefings for practical, in-the-field use. This training will ensure sustainability after we've left, so your Circle practice remains in use.

OPTION #2 (A HYBRID)

Sweethearts & Heroes Circle Training | After our ignition event, we'll return for a training on our Round Table and/or FLASH Circle process with your foreman, management, and gatekeepers to merge Circle with existing safety briefings. This process includes:



The importance of Activation for learning and bonding



How to merge your safety topics with human conversations



Closing your briefing with gratitude and positive norms

DIY Implementation | Our Round Table and FLASH Circle training will allow your foreman, gatekeepers, and management team to run culture-changing Circles as well as simple 20–30 minute “stand-up” Circles built around safety concepts and connection.

*Your team will also be supported with all our program digital assets through our **5th Wire Online Platform**. Individuals who complete this training will also be eligible for a future Train the Trainer.*

OPTION #3 (AUTONOMOUS)

DIY Training & Implementation | With our ignition event, you'll receive our **5th Wire Online Platform** and all its associated digital assets. The platform includes:



The 5th Wire HOPE Series
(based on keynote) for
future employee onboarding



Our **Round Table & FLASH
Circle Masterclass** for training
your foreman and gatekeepers



Weekly Human Briefings, pre-
designed Circle starters built
around premier safety topics

The 5th Wire Platform | While nothing replaces embodied, synchronous learning/training/practice, our online platform has everything you need to keep our message going. The platform is designed specifically for IBEW Locals and Contractors.

All videos and digital assets can all be integrated into your existing learning management system.

Intro



PLAY

Episode #1



PLAY

Episode #2



PLAY

TRAIN THE TRAINER

We also offer a *Train-the-Trainer Circle Training* that goes beyond the mere “nuts and bolts” of the Circle process. With this training, we’ll certify an elite group of your safety and leadership staff to train future foremen, management, and gatekeepers in how to run our Round Table & FLASH Circles.

Trained facilitators must facilitate a minimum of 20+ sessions before this training.

Usually completed 6 months after the initial Circle Training.

This will make you fully autonomous without our continued support.

Sweethearts and Heroes provided us with some tools to help have the courage to speak up, help others, and see that other possibilities do exist. They're helping the industry learn that we can still be tough and show that we care.

Nathan Boutwell, Vice President EHS & Training Northline Utilities, LLC

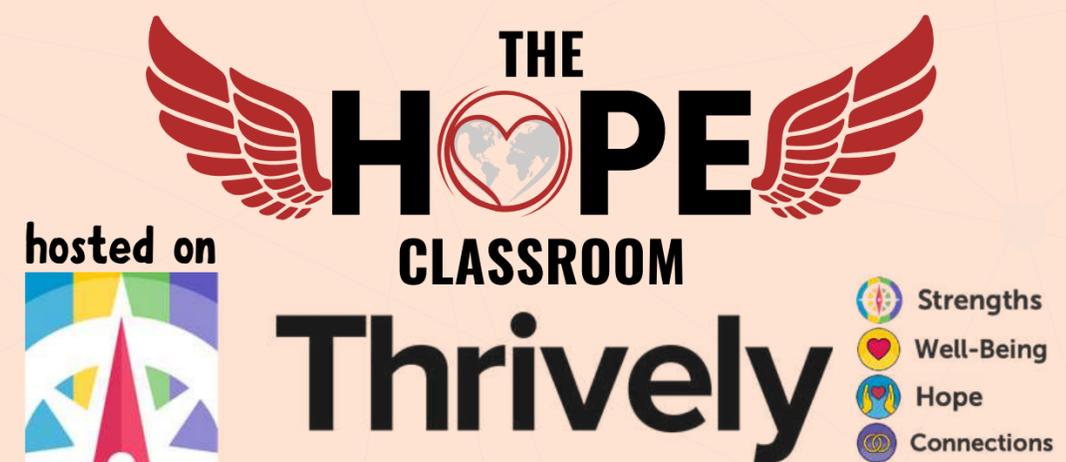
IGNITE THE NEXT GENERATION



*Our foundational work begins in the world of education with K-12 students. As part of our 5th Wire Program, we aim to **present our foundational message of HOPE and Action to your local school(s) and community**— combining our efforts to stop the destructive decisions that are skyrocketing in our youth and promote a hopeful future in the trades.*

It reinforced how powerful it is for our students to see strong, authentic examples of hope, compassion, and perseverance from adults beyond our walls... It helped create a meaningful experience for our students and reminded all of us how impactful community partnerships can be.

Mark Schultz, Principal at CABOCES RISE Academy



WHO WE ARE WORKING WITH



No session exemplified that more than the Sweethearts & Heroes' keynote and Circle breakouts. As someone who witnessed their Circle session firsthand, I can tell you this isn't just another talk—it's a transformational experience. The Sweethearts & Heroes team will lay bare the data on the construction mental-health crisis, share deeply personal stories of loss and hope, and arm us with practical, strength-based tools to build real resilience... If you want to elevate your safety culture from compliance-only to a community that genuinely looks out for one another, Sweethearts & Heroes is for you!



Mike Starner, NECA's Executive Director of Outside Line Safety

on the Safety Professionals Conference in Des Moines, IA | May 20, 2025