

# In the Spotlight

*WITH HARRY BATTEN (VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (V.R.) ALUMNUS)*

FCB has many outstanding clients that go above and beyond, and Harry Batten, an alumnus of the V.R. program at FCB, is one such client. Amy Green, Director of Operations & Client Services, stated that “he is such a positive person who brings light and joy to the Center.”

## A MAN OF MANY TALENTS

Harry joined the National Guard just out of high school. After fifteen years, he attained the rank of Master Sergeant (E-8). While Senior Instructor at the Florida National Guard Military Academy, he first began to notice his vision loss. He could no longer see in the dark during night maneuvers and began to run into trees. This sparked his first vocational transition.

“I then became a Licensed Optician. After twelve years, I could no longer do the refractions in the dark exam rooms,” Harry stated. He reinvented himself time and time again, from being the Chief Operations Officer for a chemical distribution warehouse, Licensed Body Wrapper, Certified Building Contractor, and working his way up in Apria Healthcare from a driver to a Home Health Coordinator. While working for Apria Healthcare, his vision suddenly became much worse and he became legally blind.

## BECOMING A FIREWALKER

“After the shock of becoming legally blind...I can truly understand how 1% of the blind and low vision commit suicide within the first year of losing their sight. I lost my ability to drive, my job, my home, my collector cars that I had for years. I showed up at FCB and Amy [Green] was my savior. I felt much better that I had a plan in place so I could move from point A to B... FCB really saved me when my whole world was falling apart. Now, I am fiercely independent and want to be an advocate for the blind and low vision [community].”

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Harry calls himself a “Firewalker,” which is a concept popularized by Anthony Robbins. A person performs the activity of walking on hot coals, or “fire,” as demonstration that it is possible for people to do things that seem impossible, by turning fear into power.

“Harry is the type of client that reminds me of why I do this job” explained Andrew Ly, Assistive Technology Instructor. Harry’s remarkable motivation and drive encourages other clients to reach their goals and helps reaffirm that the training FCB provides truly makes a difference in clients’ lives.

Harry concluded by saying: “The best way to chew a yard of bubble gum is one inch at a time. Sometimes a task can seem monumental when you try to visualize the entire thing, but if you break it down into smaller goals, suddenly it can become manageable.”

