

LOCAL

# Violet Queen provides purpose at Hope Valley nonprofit retreat center

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HANOVER – She's turning hardship into blessing.

"My story isn't all sunshine, but it's been a goal of mine to turn those showers into beautiful flowers," Violet Queen said. "Coming from an unstable home, I didn't really have dreams growing up. No one ever told me to think about my future. When you're in an unstable environment, you think about survival."

Today, Queen is executive director of Hope Valley, a nonprofit retreat center. She also mentors foster care and domestic violence victims and is a certified life coach among other things.

Hope Valley, which is on property formerly owned by Dave Longaberger, 4560 Gratiot Rd SE, provides services for those with grief and hosts a variety of retreats for organizations and corporations. This summer, it hosted a youth camp, and its work to "bridge the gap between youth and first responders" is a highlight for Queen.

"I never thought I would be here changing lives, and I also get to be an at-risk youth adviser and mentor for kids that are like me," Queen said. "I get to be the person I needed growing up."

Queen grew up in another part of the state, she said, in a troubled environment, "always looking for a safe shelter." After moving to Licking County, she moved out on her own before her senior year of high school.

"I worked so I was able to get an apartment and create my own stable home environment while still going to high school," she said. "Without a doubt, it was some of the most challenging times of my life, but this is where my drive comes from."

Queen graduated from Heath High School in 2011.

"I graduated on time," she said. "Being successful and always doing what I can to grow has been my only option from a very young age. Coming from an unstable home, it was evident to me quickly that I was in charge of my own life, experiences and growth."

Then at a local bank, Queen quickly advanced from teller to branch manager.

"I loved what I did," she said. "But no matter how many deals I closed it never felt like I was filling my purpose. I prayed hard. I got into helping at Hope Landing, a non-profit that helps kids getting out of foster care. I became an at-risk youth advisor for them. I was able to use my growing up experience along with my banking background to help youth with credit, finding an apartment, toxic relationships, what are red flags, breaking generational curses."



Queen then connected with Jamie Clouse, who was beginning to formulate the plan for Hope Valley.

"I knew this was what I was being called to do," Queen said. "Jamie Clouse had a vision of a nonprofit retreat center, and I took it and ran with it. We've been doing this together since Day 1. I was the only employee for our first two years."

Hope Valley started in 2021. It recently hosted a self-help summit for more than 60 kids in foster care.

"When I first met Violet, I was immediately drawn to her genuine personality and her passion for wanting to help and give back to her community," Clouse said. "The fact that I met her and heard her story right after I had the vision of creating Hope Valley was truly a God moment. She was a perfect fit. One of her most valuable qualities is her ability to connect so strongly and sincerely in a small group or one on one. Her authentic personality allows individuals and groups to relax, have fun, trust and accomplish their goals."

It indeed was match made in heaven.

"I am so incredibly blessed," Queen said. "I used to be so angry with God for putting me through all the hardships, always looking for a safe shelter. I kept asking God why? Hope Valley is why. My peace is my No. 1 priority and God sends the exact people who need to hear that story. These people are post foster care, domestic violence victims, CEOs of million-dollar companies, community leaders, politicians. Everyone is starting to make their peace a priority. I'm looking forward to many more dreams coming true and watching God's miracles play out."

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