

## Sheriff's mentorship program to host training

Central Oregon Partnership for Youth (COPY) will hold a 3.5-hour virtual fall volunteer training on Saturday, September 26.

COPY is a program in the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office that mentors children of the Bend, Sisters, Redmond, and La Pine areas with incarcerated parents.

The more than 40 mentors of this program are volunteer members of the community. The program allows children to participate and engage in a wide range of community activities.

Children with an incarcerated parent or caregiver face greater risks, barriers, and challenges than those fortunate enough to live in a more stable family environment. The Deschutes County Sheriff's Office created the COPY program to provide support and assistance to the children of inmates, giving them an opportunity to succeed.

COPY is not a court-mandated program. Youth and families have to apply and be supportive to become involved. COPY does not work with juvenile offenders or kids with extreme mental health needs.

For more information on being a COPY Mentor, visit <https://sheriff.deschutes.org/jail/copy-program>.

## Volunteering at Sisters Fire District is rewarding

By Kema Clark  
Correspondent

Ken Ammann says he's done a lot of crazy things in his life, but being a volunteer firefighter for the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District team is definitely the most rewarding of all.

"It was a complete surprise to me how much I get out of helping, since I had no background in firefighting," he told *The Nugget*. "It was pure chance I even joined the team."

Five years ago, Ken and a few friends were riding their motorcycles and just happened to run into Deputy Chief Tim Craig.

"We almost literally ran into Tim's patrol car while he was riding around getting to know his district better, Ammann recalled. "I had seen the 'Volunteers Needed' signs at the Camp Sherman substation, but hadn't thought about volunteering."

Tim was a cyclist also, so they started talking, and after 30-40 minutes, Tim suggested coffee and conversation, which led to Ken training and joining the team.

One of Ken's favorite memories is from when he first started training.

"Mike McLaughlin and I were both in our early 50s, so we called ourselves the two old guys since everyone else in the class was 18-23 years old."

Ken and Mike challenged themselves after the others went home and would video each other to make sure they

met all the time requirements, including self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) readiness. Tragically, Mike died of cancer a year after the training academy, but Ken said the friendship they shared and the bond of going through training will never be forgotten.

Ken noted the calls he goes out on are not specific to fires.

"All the volunteers carry pagers and get basic info on it, plus info from a 911 app and verbal info by radio," he said.

The volunteers don't have to go out on every call, but it's a close community and many calls are people they know. Tom, a friend and volunteer, has been volunteering for over 40 years and has been a great mentor to Ken.

"We let each other know if we're going out of town or won't be available."

In recent weeks, Ken has helped with several fires, including helping the Forest Service by driving a water tender, torching to burn out small fuel, and going to homes in Level 2 areas to note characteristics of every address.

"Driving at night in heavy smoke, on little back dirt roads, having to depend on GPS since phone service can be challenging," he said. "You have to know the roads."

Ken has also been spending time prepping his own property in the Camp Sherman area.

"I definitely don't want to get 'the look' from my wife,



PHOTO PROVIDED

Ken Ammann (right), pictured with his friend Mike McLaughlin who subsequently died of cancer, began volunteering with the Sisters-Camp Sherman Rural Fire Protection District in his early 50s.

Lauren, if I fail to prep our own property after all my training in fire prevention!" he said.

Ken said Lauren always supports him in his commitment to his volunteer work.

"Her first comment when I get a late night call is, 'What can I help you with to get going?'"

Lauren also helps motivate him if he's had a tiring day when it's weekly drill night. She tells him "Get off the couch and go! You know you're going to have a great time!" And when he returns from the drill, he's happy because he did have a great time.

Ken enjoys spending his

spare time in the middle of nowhere — backpacking off motorcycles and rides into the desert or mountains. He and Lauren also volunteer with Friends of the Metolius.

Volunteers with the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District team are always needed and appreciated. The training required to be a structural and wildland firefighter ensures volunteers are ready for whatever comes. The Fire Corps is also a great opportunity to help support the field crews and provide info to the community. A full description of the training and application process is available at [www.sistersfire.com/volunteer-program-2/](http://www.sistersfire.com/volunteer-program-2/).

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