

FIRST IN HIS CLASS

Redmond man is Central Oregon vet program's 1st grad

BY GARRETT ANDREWS

For the Spokesman

Outside the Central Oregon Vet Center, Julian Duran became the first graduate of Veterans Intervention Strategy, a novel alternative justice program for military veterans in Deschutes County.

But instead of a diploma, Amanda Juza, director of the Central Oregon Vet Center, passed Duran a challenge coin in the palm of her hand Wednesday morning.

Challenge coins are given by military commanders to recognize special achievement — a fact not lost on Duran.

"This started out as a horrible nightmare," Duran told a small crowd composed primarily of his support network for the past year. "I made some bad choices, and never in a million years did I think it would turn out to be like this."

After a decade of military service, including overseas deployments, Duran had moved to Redmond in 2018 but struggled to adapt to civilian life. Last March, Duran, 34, was arrested for fighting in a bar in Redmond, his fourth arrest involving alcohol and violence in two years.

With three prior convictions for assault, the bar fight meant Duran likely would have been sentenced to at least a year in prison, according to prosecutor Matthew Nelson, who represents the Deschutes County District Attorney's office at the intervention program.

Instead, Duran found a path to recovery.

Duran was raised in Carson City, Nevada, and went as far as eighth grade in school.

In 2007, at 18, he married his childhood sweetheart and joined the U.S. Air Force. He served six years active duty, specializing as an F-15 crew chief. Always mechanically



Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

Julian Duran is congratulated by Amanda Juza, director of the Central Oregon Vet Center, left, as his girlfriend, Melanie Coffman, looks on during a graduation ceremony Wednesday in Bend.

inclined, he then worked as a contractor for two years for NASA, before returning to the military as a contractor for the Department of Defense. He supported special operations as a flying crew chief, traveling to conflicts in Syria and Africa. This role included support work for private military company Blackwater and Sierra Nevada Corp.

"We went on a lot of weird missions, and I was gone a lot," he said.

Civilian life challenged him. "No meals provided. No scheduled downtime. It was just really different," he said. "It was just complete disarray."

He had nightmares, too: "It was a lot of chaos."

His first wife left Redmond for Texas with their kids. He turned to drinking and found himself in bars night after night. He had no family in town, no human connections. And "trauma doesn't mix well with alcohol."

In the military, guys would go out at night in packs, he said. But, as a civilian, "when another man starts acting drunk or lippy toward you, you don't have all your buddies there pulling you away," Duran said.

"I think that (fighting) was kind of typical in the military.

It wasn't like that big a deal," he said. "But in the civilian sector, it's totally unreasonable."

Duran's attorney, Casey Baxter, suggested he consider a new program offered by the district attorney's office — Veterans Intervention Strategy. The program involves the district attorney's office, local defense attorneys and the Central Oregon Vet Center.

For years in Deschutes County, limited resources prevented the creation of a treatment court for veterans, Juza said. The intervention program is an attempt to get around that by effectively conducting vet court proceedings outside of a courtroom.

There are currently eight program participants, and the program hopes to hold graduation ceremonies every third Wednesday of the month.

To Duran, the program sounded better than prison.

"I thought it was going to be like another government program, but it wound up being a really interesting adventure," he said. "I wound up digging into some things, like PTSD and childhood trauma, that were causing me to not be functional in society."

He appreciated that the program had formal expectations clearly spelled out for him. He

was to stay off drugs and alcohol and participate in mental health treatment.

He took part in eye movement desensitization and re-processing therapy to treat his unaddressed post-traumatic stress disorder. He and his counselor focused on his dreams and that helped him develop a new, healthier way of thinking.

His parole and probation officer, Nicole Taylor, remembers Duran was "all over the place" when she met him.

"It wasn't bad. He had all these plans he wanted to tell me about. It just seems like he was always looking for that affirmation," she said.

About six months after entering the intervention program, he "calmed down" considerably, Taylor said.

Duran thinks he was successful because fellow veterans in the program met him at his level.

His mentor, Roger Riolo, said it was because of something else: "He was ready."

To close the graduation ceremony, Riolo, a retired Air Force veteran, read aloud the Marc Kelly Smith poem, "Pull the next one up."

"When you get to the top of the mountain, pull the next one up.

Then there will be two of you roped together at the waist, tired and proud, knowing the mountain,

Knowing the human force it took

to bring you both there."

Duran, a father of three young children, now dates a preschool teacher with two children of her own.

He's an aircraft maintenance manager for AI Systems Inc. at Redmond Airport.

He's completed the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and is now a sponsor. He wants the next phase of his life to involve helping others.

"There are lots of guys who are still in that bar."

Reporter: 541-383-0325, gandrews@bendbulletin.com

Calendar

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High Desert Stampede: A fast-paced, entertaining rodeo event that draws a wide variety of spectators; 7 p.m.; \$20-\$30; Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center, 3800 SW Airport Way, Redmond; expo.deschutes.org or 541-548-2711.

Olivia Awbrey Band: The indie singer, songwriter will perform; 8-10 p.m.; \$8; High Desert Music Hall, 818 SW Forest Ave., Redmond; highdesertmusicall.com or 541-527-1387.

Friday 3/25

Oceanography: The Oakland-based singer, songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist will perform; 8 p.m.; \$5 advanced, \$10 at door; High Desert Music Hall, 818 SW Forest Ave., Redmond; highdesertmusicall.com or 541-527-1387.

Coffee Clatter — Toastmasters: Join for a morning of business networking and check out what's new with Toastmasters; 8:30-9:30 a.m.; free; Redmond Grange, 707 SW Kalama Ave., Redmond; visitredmondoregon.com or 541-480-4495.

Central Oregon Comedy Scene presents Standup Comedy: Local comedians will perform; 7-10 p.m.; \$15-\$20; General Duffy's Watering Hole, 404 SW Forest Ave., Redmond; facebook.com/GeneralDuffys or 541-527-4345.

High Desert Stampede: A fast-paced, entertaining rodeo event that draws a wide variety of spectators; 7 p.m.; \$20-\$30; Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center, 3800 SW Airport Way, Redmond; expo.deschutes.org or 541-548-2711.

Saturday 3/26

Central Oregon Ag Show: Something for everyone from farmers, ranchers of all operation sizes and Equine enthusiasts; 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; free; Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center, 3800 SW Airport Way, Redmond; northwestagshow.com or 541-548-2711.

Growing Vegetables in Central Oregon: Join the Central Oregon chapter of OSU Master Gardeners for a free one-hour, on-demand video class and 2 live Zoom Q&A sessions on vegetable gardening; 10-11 a.m.; free; OSU Extension Service, Online; extension.oregonstate.edu or 541-548-6088.

Live in the Tasting Room — The Substitutes: The local self-proclaimed rock and roll band will perform; 5-8 p.m.; \$15 adults, children 12 and under free; Faith, Hope and Charity Vineyards, 70450 NW Lower Valley Drive, Terrebonne; faithhopeandcharityevents.com or 541-526-5075.

High Desert Stampede: A fast-paced, entertaining rodeo event that draws a wide variety of spectators; 7 p.m.; \$20-\$30; Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center, 3800 SW Airport Way, Redmond; expo.deschutes.org or 541-548-2711.

Countryfied: The country rock based band will perform; 7-10 p.m.; \$20; General Duffy's Waterhole, 404 SW Forest Ave., Redmond; facebook.com/GeneralDuffys or 541-527-4345.

The Sometimes Island & Special Guests: The indie pop band will perform; 8 p.m.; \$5; High Desert Music Hall, 818 SW Forest Ave., Redmond; highdesertmusicall.com or 541-527-1387.

Sunday 3/27

Central Oregon Ag Show: Something for everyone from Farmers, Ranchers of all operation sizes and Equine Enthusiasts; 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; free; Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center, 3800 SW Airport Way, Redmond; northwestagshow.com or 541-548-2711.

Sunday Brunch and Karaoke: Join for brunch and Karaoke; 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; free; General Duffy's Watering Hole, 404 SW Forest Ave., Redmond; facebook.com/GeneralDuffys or 541-527-4345.

Cantastic Pay It Forward Barrel Race: The barrel race will be held; 12 p.m.; Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center, 3800 SW Airport Way, Redmond; expo.deschutes.org or 541-548-2711.

Comedy Night: Comedians Cody Michael, Carl Click, Dillon Kolar, and Katy Ippock will perform; 7 p.m.; \$20; Porter Brewing Co., 611 NE Jackpine Ct #2, Redmond; facebook.com/porterbrewingco or 541-504-7959.

Monday 3/28

Growing Vegetables in Central Oregon: Join the Central Oregon chapter of OSU Master Gardeners for a free one-hour, on-demand video class and 2 live Zoom Q&A sessions on vegetable gardening; 7-8 p.m.; free; OSU Extension Service, Online; extension.oregonstate.edu or 541-548-6088.

Tuesday 3/29

Writers Writing — Quiet Writing Time: Enjoy the focus of a quiet space with the benefit of others' company; 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; free; Redmond Public Library, 827 SW Deschutes Ave., Redmond; deschuteslibrary.org or 541-312-1050.

Ladies of the Green Kick-off Brunch: Prospective lady golfers and returning members are invited to attend this "Get Acquainted Brunch" to hear the fun things the golf group has planned for the 2022 golf season; 11 a.m.; free call to RSVP; The Redmond Grange Hall, 707 SW Kalama Ave., Redmond

Virtual City Council Workshop: A regular meeting will be held; 6-8 p.m.; free; Redmond City Hall, Online; redmondoregon.gov or 541-923-7710.

Trivia Tuesday: Go with a team or team up there to play genuine UKB Trivia live and possibly win gift certificates; 6:30-8:30 p.m.; free; Initiative Brewing, 424 NW Fifth St., Redmond; facebook.com/InitiativeBrew or 541-527-4380.

FFA

Continued from P1

Two years ago, Oregon FFA members were preparing for the annual state convention when the first COVID-19 restrictions were announced. All public gatherings were banned to prevent the spread of the virus, forcing the cancellation of the convention a week before it was scheduled to begin.

Oregon FFA leaders moved quickly to pivot to a virtual convention in 2020, then again in 2021. While not ideal, the format still allowed members to compete in events, attend workshops and elect new officers.

Kendall Castrow, a senior at Redmond High School, said she is excited to be coming out of the pandemic and reuniting with her fellow FFA members from across the state.

"I feel like there's been a lot of built-up energy," Castrow said. "Everybody gets to kind of release that energy and just



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

Students dance and sing March 17 before the opening session of the Oregon FFA State Convention at the Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center.

be themselves."

Bush, the Tillamook FFA advisor, said this year was his 15th state convention as both a teacher and student. It was at here, Bush said, that he met his best friend and the future best man at his wedding. It was also here that he decided he wanted to become an agriculture teacher in his hometown.

"The kids learn stuff here they can take home," Bush said. "Perhaps most importantly,

they learn who they are."

Gary Walls, a senior from Ione, met Saturday morning with Corrina Smith and Dakota Anderson, both sophomores from Elgin. Walls, who joined FFA in seventh grade, had just earned his State Degree, the highest award a state FFA association can bestow on its members.

The friends said they remember feeling disappointed when the state convention was

canceled in 2020. Now it was time to celebrate.

"You can feel all the positivity and great emotions in-person," Walls said.

"I'm really a people person," Anderson added. "I like to meet new people."

Phil Ward, Oregon FFA CEO, said this year they eclipsed 14,000 total members statewide — the most in the state organization's history.

For the majority of these students, Ward said this was their first in-person state convention.

"They're seeing it for the first time with fresh eyes," he said. "It's been fun to watch."

Though Ward said he is proud of Oregon FFA for how it has responded to the pandemic, there is simply no substitute for being together in person.

"It just reminds me of what FFA is all about," he said. "This is an organization that builds potential in young people."

Citizen

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"I was bored after I retired and didn't want to stay that way."

The "Business of the Year" award went to AccuAir Heating and Cooling and its owners Dave and Kristen Sale. The SCP Redmond Hotel won "New Business of the Year," which was accepted by hotel general manager Tobias Colvin. The customer service award went to Nichole Meagher of Willow Wild, while the community impact award went to Roxia Thornton Todoroff, who retired after a long career at the Deschutes County Fair and Expo Center. Teri Jansen was named "Ambassador of the Year."

The 38th Annual Redmond Chamber of Commerce & CVB banquet took place Friday, March 11 at Eagle Crest Convention Center. Nominations for each category were accepted throughout December 2021.

Besides the night's honorees, attendees enjoyed the traditional "mad dash" to the individually decorated tables in anticipation of the giveaways

and prizes. Multiple local businesses sponsor tables each year, which they decorate with a theme complemented by giveaways, games and prizes.



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Partners In Care

Upcoming Grief Support Series

Partners In Care offers a variety of support services for families, friends, and the community when a loved one dies. The following series will begin in April and end in June. All conducted virtually.

Mindfulness & Grief Class – 10 weekly sessions beginning April 25 - 3:00pm-4:30pm
Spousal Loss Support Group – 8 weekly sessions beginning April 26 - 10:30am-noon
General Grief Support Group – 8 weekly sessions beginning April 28 - 10:30am-noon

Open to the community at no cost!

Register by calling (541) 382-5882 and a Zoom registration will be emailed to you.

(541) 382-5882 PartnersBend.org

Hospice | Home Health | Hospice House | Transitions | Palliative Care | Grief Support