

KeizerCommunity

KEIZERTIMES.COM

MHS counselor among state's best

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

McNary High counselor Todd Bobeda calls counseling the "best job in the world" and prides himself on trying to make a difference, one life at a time.

Bobeda's commitment to providing guidance and direction to students in the Salem-Keizer School District over the last 15 years hasn't gone unnoticed, which is why he was named a finalist for the 2020 Oregon School Counselor of the Year.

"I always longed to be that person that got to go to that deeper level of what students' needs are. For me, I have some really incredible stories of students, and I get to be the one, mainly just by my position, that gets to help them to make a small adjustment in their life that will hopefully last forever. It's such a cool job to take a kid that is hurting and give them a little hope," Bobeda said.

Bobeda was a counselor at South Salem High School for 13 years before coming to McNary as a counselor in 2019. He was nominated for the award by the counseling team at South Salem

"It was a huge recognition and an awesome honor. It really meant the world to me," Bobeda said.

During his tenure at South Salem, the school was recognized as a Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) three separate times by the American School Counselors Association as the counseling team provided data on how the school met the personal, social, academic and college and career needs of students. Bobeda said he is in the process of bringing the

RAMP mindset to McNary.

"This team at McNary is phenomenal. They have already had those pieces together, it's just that the presentation of the data is a lot of work," Bobeda said.

Bobeda started at McNary as a special education teacher from 2004 to 2006, where he also was an assistant coach for the soccer, wrestling and tennis programs. Even though he was at South Salem as a counselor for over a decade, Bobeda felt like he returned home when he came back to McNary.

"I have always had a heart for McNary. To come back here has been incredible," Bobeda said. "McNary is kind of my home. Even when I left, I knew I wanted to end up back here. I hope I stay here for a long time. It has been a cool return."

Bobeda approaches his work with joyful exuberance, which rubs off to both his students and his coworkers.

"Todd is a great guy — super easy to get along with and committed to his work. To have him back at McNary has been really special. He is a really positive coworker to have on staff. He is a glass-half-full kind of guy. He always finds a way to put a positive spin on anything," McNary principal Erik Jespersen said. "His positive attitude transfers to all the people that he interacts with. He genuinely cares about all the people he works for and with."



Todd Bobeda

Along with being a counselor, Bobeda served in the military for 25 years before retiring in April. For the last 16 years, Bobeda would serve one weekend per month as a warrant officer with the Oregon National Guard — along with teaching suicide and depression awareness for soldiers.

Juggling his responsibilities as a husband and father of four along with his counseling and military duties was stressful for Bobeda at times, but he was proud to serve his country.

"It was difficult because of 12-day work weeks I would have to endure each month but it was still pretty cool. It was fun to be a part of a number of different units," Bobeda said. "And I got to use my counsel-

ing background to help young soldiers that were in need."

For the last 10 months, Bobeda has had to reinvent the way he works as a counselor due to the COVID-19 pandemic, relying mostly on emails and Zoom calls when communicating with students.

Over the course of this school year, Bobeda has been able to volunteer during limited in-person instruction at McNary, talking about suicide curriculum in wellness classes. However, he said his job has become more difficult since the pandemic began.

"It is a lot different. You have to work harder, because nobody is sending kids down when they have a rough day," Bobeda said. "I miss the facial connection. So much of language in non-verbal, and some of the kids that need me the most won't pick up a telephone."

Even though he can't meet with kids face-to-face, Bobeda's care for his students has never wavered.

"My goal is to help kids understand that someone cares about them. It's incredible to have the (administration) at McNary support like they do. I love this job," Bobeda said.



OFC. JENNIFER STARNES

Starnes has worked with the Keizer Police Department for over two years. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in contemporary music, but then switched courses to become a veterinary technician. Though she loved being surprised with new challenges every day and helping animals, it wasn't the job she wanted to retire out of.

After going on a few ride-alongs with a friend she fell in love with police work and has been pursuing it ever since.

"It was a little bit tough at first because I did not have a lot of experience," Starnes said. Even so, she has found her stride within the department.

Police work is often viewed as a "man's" job but Starnes doesn't let that get under her skin. She said every officer brings different skills to the table and all of them are needed to have a well-rounded department.

"It's not a guy's job. There are physical requirements, like you have to be strong but you also have to be able to talk to people. That's a huge part of it too," Starnes said.

She wanted to be a police officer because she desired to help people. Police often see



people on their worst day and Starnes' goal is to relieve their suffering.

Police as a whole have come under fire because of the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers, but Starnes said doesn't let that discourage her.

"I just keep thinking about how great this place is to work. The majority of the public still really appreciates us and the Keizer community has showered us with love. They sent cards and goodies and more sweets than we could ever possibly eat," Starnes said.

The job has its hard moments, but Starnes is grateful to be able to work in a time where so many American's find themselves out of a job, even if it's only paperwork. Starnes has been on light duty since July due to a knee injury, but hopes to be back on the road soon.

Officers from the Keizer Police Department (KPD) agreed to sit down and talk with the Keizertimes as part of a series of profiles on first responders in Keizer.

dish BRING EVERYTHING YOU LOVE TOGETHER!

Blazing Fast Internet! ADD TO YOUR PACKAGE FOR ONLY \$19.99/mo. where available.

2-YEAR TV PRICE GUARANTEE | \$59.99 MO. for 12 Mos. | America's Top 120 Package | 190 CHANNELS Including Local Channels!

CALL TODAY - For \$100 Gift Card. Promo Code: DISH100

1-866-373-9175 Offer ends 1/31/21.

Keizer & Salem's Go-To-Guy for Buying & Selling

TALK TO BOB The go-to Realtor with over 25 years in the real estate & mortgage lending industry

Call or Text 503-983-4086

3975 River Rd N Suite 3 - Keizer
bobshackl@gmail.com

2016 KEIZER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MERCHANT OF THE YEAR

2018-19 KEIZER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESIDENT

BOB SHACKELFORD Broker

Bob Shackelford is a licensed real estate broker in Oregon.

KEIZERTIMES SENIOR HOUSING GUIDE

Willamette Lutheran Retirement Community
Keizer's Best Kept Secret

DIRECTIONS FROM KEIZER: Drive north on River Rd. Turn left on Wheatland Rd. Go 1.5 miles. On left side of road.

UNIT TYPES: • independent living includ. studio and 1-bedroom apartments, 2-bedroom cottages

MONTHLY RENT: starting at \$1,768

ASSISTED LIVING AVAILABILITY: yes

AMENITIES: • Not-for-profit, Christian community serving all faiths • Pets allowed • No Extra Charge for a 2nd person • 24-hour nurse on staff for emergency response • 3-delicious homecooked meals daily • Van service for shopping & medical appts • Housekeeping • Great Social Activities • Church Services

7693 Wheatland Rd N, Keizer, OR 97303 • 503-393-1491 • www.willamettelutheran.com • e-mail: kay@willamettelutheran.com

AVAMERE COURT at KEIZER
A PART OF THE AVAMERE FAMILY OF COMPANIES

DIRECTIONS FROM KEIZER: From I-5, turn west on Lockhaven. Turn left at River Rd, then left on Claggett St. Immediately turn in driveway at left.

UNIT TYPES: • independent living apts • assisted living apts • rehabilitation, skilled nursing & long term care beds

MONTHLY RENT: starting at \$1,837

ASSISTED LIVING AVAILABILITY: yes

AMENITIES: • Beautiful 5-acre campus • Family-like culture • Continuum of care to meet all your loved one's needs • Quality lifestyle for active seniors • Our assisted living is 9 years deficiency-free • WE ARE HERE FOR YOU. WE ARE FAMILY.

5210 River Rd N, Keizer, OR 97303 • PH: 503-393-3624 x340 • CELL: 971-599-9484 • www.avamercourtatkeizer.com

the Village at Keizer Ridge
ASSISTED LIVING AND MEMORY CARE

DIRECTIONS FROM KEIZER: On River Road, one-half mile north of McNary Estates. Right on McGee Ct, take second driveway on left.

UNIT TYPES: • Assisted Living • Memory Care

MONTHLY RENT: starting at \$2,855

ASSISTED LIVING AVAILABILITY: Yes

AMENITIES: • Individualized Care Plans • State-of-the-art theater • Raised garden beds • All day fresh gourmet dining • Life enriching, meaningful, stimulating activities • Resident created activity calendar • Courtyard walking path • More staff on hand 24/7 than other local facilities • Private & semi-private Memory Care apartments

1165 McGee Court NE, Keizer, OR 97303 • 503-390-1300 • www.VillageAtKeizerRidge.com

Emerald Pointe Senior Living Community

DIRECTIONS FROM KEIZER: On River Road, one-half mile north of McNary Estates.

UNIT TYPES: • Studio • 1 BR w/ deck or walk-in closet • 2 BR, 1 BA • 2 BR, 2 BA w/ deck or walk-in closet

MONTHLY RENT: starting at \$1,350

ACTIVE INDEPENDENT LIVING: yes

AMENITIES: • Full kitchens in every apartment • Beauty Salon • Optional Meal Plans • Staffed 24/7 • Full Activities Calendar • Weekly Excursions • Special Dietary Needs Met • Coffee Lounge • Housekeeping • Community Room • Activity Rooms • Transportation to doctors, shopping, and more • Waist High Gardens • Walking Paths • Free WiFi

1125 McGee Ct NE, Keizer, OR 97303 • 503-390-7700 • www.EmeraldPointeKeizer.com