



STAFF PHOTO BY JENNIFER COLTON

Morgan Johnson, of Pendleton, receives a certificate during the Umatilla County Drug Court graduation on Friday. After struggling with a methamphetamine addiction, Johnson credits drug court with saving her life.

DRUGS:

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Not everyone charged with a drug- or alcohol-related crime lands in Drug Court however. The program focuses on medium and high-risk offenders, and low-risk offenders who complete probation without re-offending do not enter the program.

The program is designed to last nine months but may take years.

"A lot of it depends on the support. People who have family support often do better. If you don't have that support structure, it takes longer to get back on your feet," Temple said.

Morgan Johnson, of Pendleton, is one of those cases. After 2 1/2 years in the program, Johnson graduated Umatilla County Drug Court on Friday. She, like Massingale, says drug court saved her life. Johnson took her first hit of methamphetamine on the night of her high school graduation.

"When I was out there using, I didn't think I had a problem — until I got caught," she said. "This

showed me a new way to live. I'm really very grateful that I was put into Drug Court."

The program helps work with users who have lost everything as well as those who may appear to have it together. Massingale, for example, managed to attend college classes and maintain a job while struggling with her addiction. When she committed to the Drug Court program, she suddenly had to struggle with attending hours of meetings, counseling and drug testing each week.

"It's hard. You just set yourself to it," Massingale said. "You tell yourself you can do it and your life will be better. I went to many lengths to get high. I can go many lengths to get sober."

To complete Drug Court, participants are expected to have a job or be enrolled in school fulltime.

"We're really trying to create responsible citizens by the end of the program," Temple said.

During the ceremony, Temple and state Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, presented graduates with plaques and a yellow rose

of recovery. Craig Rodriguez, a Umatilla Drug Court Alumnus, spoke during the graduation ceremony.

"Without Drug Court, I probably wouldn't be standing here today," said Rodriguez. "It was a path to salvation for me."

Rodriguez, one of the first graduates of Umatilla Drug Court, grew up in a drug environment and became a cocaine dealer — and addict — at the age of 17. It took the death of his mother, the loss of his children and an overdose for him to give rehabilitation a chance.

"Drug Court is just a name. It's the people that work and keep hope alive," he told current participants during the graduation. "There is hope."

The graduates each had advice to those struggling with addictions: Join Drug Court and take it seriously if it's an option, focus on what's important and take one day at a time.

"It would be a really wise decision to join," Johnson said. "You have to be open minded, you have to want to be there, but you can do it."

KEYS:

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"I think my focus for the first chunk of time is listening to people and asking what they need from BMCC," Keys said. "I will then take that information back to leadership and see what BMCC can do to meet those needs."

Although Keys will be new to BMCC, she is already familiar with the Eastern Oregon Higher Education Center. Keys is currently the EOU Hermiston Center Director, as well as an advisor for the La Grande-based college, who splits time between Pendleton and Hermiston.

Familiar with ongoing programs, Keys hopes to continue efforts to bring a more collegiate feel to the Hermiston campus and to continue working with EOU to expand offerings at the Eastern Oregon Higher Education Center.

"I think (EOU) is at a good point now with our

partnership with BMCC so someone else can step in and continue the work to make sure students have options for the four-year-degrees that the west

end of the county needs," Keys said.

She added that goal includes expansion in face-to-face classes with EOU faculty.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Girl's Night Out features fashion, fun and more

Food, drinks, makeovers, a fashion show, vendors and surprise entertainment are featured in the Girl's Night Out.

With proceeds going to the Kiwanis Club of Boardman, the event is Saturday from 6-10 p.m. at the Riverfront Center at the Port of Morrow, 2 Marine Drive, Boardman. It's open to ages 13 and up. Tickets are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door.

For more information, call Deanna Camp at 541-571-7089 or visit www.facebook.com/events/1735312810015059.

Project provides voice to soldiers

The Red Badge Project provides information on how to share the experiences of veterans.

Defending your Voice: Teaching Soldiers How to Tell Their Stories includes a writing workshop and presentation at Blue Mountain Community College in Hermiston. Whether the narrative voice is in the first person, nonfiction or fiction, the goal is to be heard and understood.

For the past two years, author Shawn Wong and others with the Red Badge Project have been teaching veterans at Joint Base Lewis-McChord how to share the stories of their lives. Through the project, soldiers have been able to articulate their experiences for themselves, their families and a wider audience through their writing.

The workshop is Wednesday (today) from 1-3 p.m. in Room 231 at BMCC, 975 S.E. Columbia Drive, Hermiston. A Red Badge Project presentation is tonight from 5:30-7 p.m. in Room 134

at BMCC, Hermiston.

For more information, call 541-567-1800 or visit www.bluecc.edu. For more about the Red Badge project, visit www.the-red-badgeproject.org.

Wine event benefits group's scholarships

An event showcasing a variety of wines will benefit Our Lady of Angels Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court No. 1692.

The event is Saturday from 6:30-8 p.m. at The Gathering Place at Bellinger's, 1823 S. Highway 395, Hermiston. The cost is \$12-\$15. A wide array of appetizers and entrees will be provided. Proceeds from ticket sales and wine purchases will benefit the Catholic Daughters' Marilyn Harris Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Tickets can be purchased at the church office, 565 W. Hermiston Ave., Hermiston, at Bellinger's or by calling Kristi Smalley at 541-567-1546.

Pregnancy Care Services sets Walk for Life

Walk for Life will raise awareness and money to help support the mission of Pregnancy Care Services.

The faith-based organization provides resources for men and women who are faced with decisions regarding an unplanned pregnancy.

Executive Director Debbie Cissna encourages people to help support the organization's effort to raise \$5,000. Registration begins Friday at 6 p.m. at McKenzie Park, 320 S. First St., Hermiston. The walk begins at 6:30 p.m.

Participants are encouraged to obtain pledges. Those who have \$100 or more in pledges will re-

ceive a T-shirt. Also, the first 100 people registered will receive a token for free ice cream at Dairy Queen.

Cissna is impressed with the efforts of 12-year-old Teagan Birt. The Boardman girl has challenged area youth groups to raise money for the event.

"She's an incredible young lady — understanding the value of life is refreshing to see in a young person," Cissna said. "She's just full of ideas and creative ways to make a difference."

Pregnancy Care Services is open Monday through Thursdays from 12:30-5 p.m. It's located at 1055 S. Highway 395, Suite 111, Hermiston. For more information, contact 541-567-2393 or debbie@pregnancycareservices.com. To make donations online or to download pledge sheets, visit www.pregnancycareservices.com.

Children's Fair highlights resources

Vendor booths and kids' activities are featured during the Morrow County Children's Fair.

Sponsored by Community Counseling Solutions, the event is Thursday from 3:30-6 p.m. in the Riverfront Center at the Port of Morrow, 2 Marine Drive, Boardman. There is no charge to attend. Families are invited to bring their kids and have fun and learn about Morrow County resources.

More than two dozen booths will provide information and activities, including face painting, button-making, a story time, hand-washing, health tips and safety information.

For more information, contact Tiah Sanderson Devin at sadeproject@gmail.com or 541-980-5436.

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GOOD SHEPHERD COMMUNITY HEALTH FOUNDATION

"Scramble for Scholarships" Friday, June 10th 1pm Shotgun Start

Big River Golf Course - Umatilla

Golfers of all skill levels are being invited to participate in the 23rd annual "Scramble for Scholarships" golf tournament. Four person teams can sign up together or individuals pairings can be made by the tournament committee. Your \$70 entry fee covers green fees, a box lunch at noon, and BBQ at the end, plus makes a charitable donation to the foundation to use in awarding scholarships for local health care students. Join us for a fun afternoon of golf for a good cause by calling 541-667-3405. **Entry deadline is June 8th.** Great prize holes and Hole-in-one on #1 wins a Ford Fusion sponsored by Tom Denchel Ford