



Douglas County Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (LPSCC)

Douglas County Courthouse
1036 SE Douglas Ave. ➤ Roseburg, Oregon 97470

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Commissioner Boice Delivers Keynote at 103rd Drug Court Graduation

(Douglas County, Ore.) The Douglas County Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (LPSCC) is thrilled to announce the graduation of seven individuals from the Drug Court program, which took place on September 5, 2023. This momentous occasion marked a significant step forward in the lives of these graduates, highlighting the importance of rehabilitation, community support, and a focus on a brighter future. Graduates included Heath Whited, Taruis Crettol, James Stepp, Travis Maples, Jason Marlin, Sarah Houston, and Cassandra Murray.

The Honorable Robert B. Johnson presided over the ceremony held in a Court Room in the Justice Building at the Douglas County Courthouse. Johnson announced that the graduates' successful completion of the program diverted 406 months prison time and at \$190 per day, the cost savings for not serving time equates to \$2,314,200.

Commissioner Chris Boice was asked to deliver the keynote address to the graduates and their friends and family. His message emphasized the transformative power of second chances and community support. He stated, *"I once came across a Facebook comment by a citizen some time ago that was honoring to read, 'Chris Boice doesn't care about your past. He only cares about your future.' And I will tell you, those words capture the spirit of the entire team right here in this room. Each one of these folks are dedicated to helping you rebuild your lives."*

Commissioner Boice reiterated Judge Johnson's stance regarding the impact of addiction on families and communities, particularly children and grandchildren and urged the graduates to persevere, not only for their own sake but for the sake of the next generation. He highlighted the importance of breaking the cycle of addiction and that through their successful completion of this program, their collective 17 children and 2 grandchildren will now have the opportunity to see them bounce back and rebuild after experiencing the destructive downside of addiction.

In his address, Commissioner Boice also acknowledged the challenges faced by law enforcement, the district attorney's office, and public defenders when dealing with addiction-related crimes. He stressed the need for community members to attend drug court graduations to witness the positive outcomes and the hard work put in by both the participants and the dedicated professionals involved in the program. Graduations are held quarterly and the 104th Ceremony is tentatively scheduled for January 9, 2024.

The Douglas County H.O.P.E. Drug Court team is comprised of representatives from Douglas County Circuit Court, the District Attorney, Douglas County Corrections Department (Parole and Probation), Adapt Integrated Health Care, the Oregon Department of Human Services, the Umpqua Valley Public Defenders, Inc., and the Douglas Interagency Narcotics Team. H.O.P.E. stands for Help, Opportunity, Pride, and Emancipation. The program is a crucial initiative aimed at providing rehabilitation and support to non-violent offenders struggling with substance abuse issues. This program offers participants a chance to address their addiction by giving them the option to avoid incarceration, focus on recovery, and ultimately reintegrate into society as productive individuals.

The recent graduation marked a significant milestone as it was the 103rd ceremony for the program since its establishment in January 1996 and has impacted the lives of 622 individuals in the community, with each success story contributing to a safer and healthier Douglas County.

The ceremony also highlighted the far-reaching effects of drug addiction, from crime reduction and family stability to the burden it places on emergency responders and healthcare facilities. The Douglas County Drug Court program continues to be an essential component in addressing addiction's multifaceted impact on the community.

Douglas County LPSCC remains dedicated to working alongside the Drug Court program and other community partners to address substance abuse issues comprehensively. Through collaboration and support, they aim to continue transforming lives and strengthening the community.

Drug Court Graduate Heath Whited said it taught him how to be accountable. ***“It’s been a crazy road. Drug Court has given me a really great support group. I see people in this room that I can count on now. It’s taught me a lot about myself. I’m grateful for everyone here, including the Drug Court team.”*** Whited celebrated 738 days clean upon graduation. He completed the residential substance abuse treatment before completing the Drug Court program with a downward departure of up to 60 months. He is employed full time and has four children and two grandchildren. ***“It’s made me a really great dad for my kids.”***

For more information about Douglas County LPSCC and the H.O.P.E. Drug Court program, please visit <https://douglascountyor.gov/514/Local-Public-Safety-Coordinating-Council> or <https://douglascountyor.gov/225/Drug-Court>.

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Honorable Robert Johnson with Drug Court Graduates (L-R): Dean Stepp, Travis Maples, Sarah Houston, Honorable Robert Johnson, Cassandra Murray, Jason Marlin, Taruis Crettol, Heath Whited



Commissioner Chris Boice



Graduate Heath Whited