



Oregon

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NEWS RELEASE

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Medford man recognized as volunteer of the year at Rogue Valley YCF

A Medford man was recognized Monday as volunteer of the year by the staff at the Rogue Valley Youth Correctional Facility in Grants Pass.

Matt Sweeney was honored for volunteering since 1997 at the 100-bed juvenile corrections facility. He mentors youth, serves on a leadership team that plans activities and is on a rotation with Grants Pass-area youth pastors to conduct Protestant Sunday services at the facility. (Roman Catholic and Native American services also are offered.)

Sweeney is juvenile justice director for Rogue Valley Youth for Christ. He is one of 41 active volunteers who assist the Oregon Youth Authority facility in fulfilling the agency mission to protect public safety and reduce crime by holding youth offenders accountable and providing opportunities for reformation in safe environments.

“Matt Sweeney has given of himself unselfishly, even dropping things he needed to do for the betterment of Rogue Valley youth,” said Ron Godwin, the facility’s volunteer coordinator and chaplain. “We can always depend on him. He’s a valuable part of the team.” He said Sweeney’s volunteer service ranges from two to 10 hours a week.

Recognitions were delivered Monday as part of National Corrections Employees Week in Oregon, May 2-8, for which Governor Ted Kulongoski signed a proclamation.

Seven Rogue Valley YCF employees, all Grants Pass residents, also were recognized. They are:

- James Buchanan, a group life coordinator, as the facility's employee of the year for his attention to detail, participation on the safety committee, cooperative spirit and working daily to fulfill the OYA mission.
- Tristan White, a group life coordinator, as security staff member of the year. As safety committee chair, White has developed new training protocols for searches and trains new staff members.
- Debbie Winn, R.N., as administrative employee of the year. Winn provides a range of medical services to youth and serves on the facility's Safety Committee.
- Bryan Gove, a youth correctional unit coordinator, as employee of the year on the Alpha living unit. He was recognized for his flexibility, diplomacy and communication skills with both adults and youth, and for offering ways to improve services to youth.
- Karren Selthon, a group life coordinator, as employee of the year on the Bravo living unit. She was recognized for her work on tracking the facility's performance-based standards, her work with the canine program, and for her flexibility in stepping in to fill other staffing needs.
- Brett Turner, a group life coordinator, as employee of the year on the Charlie living unit for his consistency in holding youth accountable and supporting his team.
- Lynn Tuttle, a youth correctional unit coordinator, as employee of the year on the Delta living unit for bringing integrity and heart to the job including forging positive relationships with probation officers, parents and co-workers.

OYA has custody of approximately 900 offenders in correctional and transitional facilities in Albany, Burns, Florence, Grants Pass, La Grande, Salem, Tillamook, Warrenton and Woodburn, and the agency supervises approximately 1,100 youth on parole and probation in communities throughout Oregon. Rogue Valley serves approximately 100 youth.

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