



Oregon

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June 21, 2010

NEWS RELEASE

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15 youth offenders recognized Monday at RiverBend commencement

In traditional caps and gowns, 15 RiverBend Youth Correctional Facility youth were recognized Monday afternoon during a commencement ceremony at the 50-bed transitional facility near La Grande.

High school diplomas were conferred on six RiverBend youth and on three former MacLaren Youth Correctional Facility youth who missed William P. Lord High School commencement at the Woodburn facility. Six RiverBend students received GED certificates.

Families were invited to the ceremony at RiverBend, one of 11 facilities operated by the Oregon Youth Authority.

Speaking to the youth, interim superintendent Brian Blisard asked them to view this milestone as a stepping stone to even greater achievements. He urged them to set goals, reach for those goals, and to “live your lives from the inside out,” being guided by integrity, morals and values rather than by environmental factors.

Along with treatment, education is recognized as key to helping OYA fulfill its mission to protect the public and reduce crime by holding offenders accountable and offering opportunities for reformation in safe environments. The Umatilla-Morrow Education Services District provides RiverBend High School staff through a contract with the Oregon Department of Education.

Besides giving youth an opportunity to earn high school credit, offenders also are able to earn post-secondary academic credit. A 24-year-old RiverBend youth who was paroled in early May received his bachelor's degree in philosophy and pre-law this spring from Washington State University after taking online classes at both

RiverBend and Robert S. Farrell High School at the Hillcrest Youth Correctional Facility in Salem.

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.

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