MULE CREEK POST

Volume [illegible], Issue V • May 2023
Mental Health Awareness Month

ARC GRADUATES FIRST COHORT
"Instead of building walls, you guys are tearing them down." —LCSW S. Jacques

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YOU'VE GOT TO SEE THESE...
View the photo gallery of some amazing Asian and Pacific Islanders

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To Our Readers

By D. Razor Babb, Feature Reporter

WELCOME TO THE May *Mule Creek Post*. We celebrate ARC graduates (pg. 1 & 2); Mother's Day (pg. 19); Mule Creek's Nathan Blalock and "Why We Write" (pg. 7). We discover "Strangers" with Ricky Ortega (pg. 8); and investigate family separation due to incarceration (pg. 9).

See "Haunted by Trauma" (pg. 10); "Who is Violent?" (pg. 12); and "The Learning Room" (pg. 25). The "Eagle and Home" leads E. Orlando Wells to his heritage (pg. 26); and then "World Record Moose" (pg. 30).

We greet new readers and send our appreciation and humble gratitude to the *Post*'s contributors and supporters.

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ARC graduates celebrate with joy

ARC Graduates First Cohort at Mule Creek State Prison

By Al King, Copy Editor

THE ANTI-RECIDIVISM Coalition (ARC) held graduation ceremonies for the first cohorts at Mule Creek State Prison in February. On Feb. 27, 2023, approximately 127 men from facilities D and E attended the event held in the visiting room on Facility E.

This all began in July 2022, when ARC instituted its three 12-week courses at the Mule Creek Infill Complex. Participants enrolled in one or more classes, which were conducted every Thursday in the facility chapels. Certificates were awarded for completion of the following subjects: 1) Criminals & Gangmembers Anonymous; 2) Emotional Intelligence; and 3) Avatar (Board of Parole Hearings preparation).

Representing ARC were Executive Director Samuel Lewis and Regional Manager of the Hope and Redemption Team (HART) Joseph Osorio; HART life coaches Sean Gage, Wajuba McDuffy, and Gary Burt; and special ARC guest Ricardo London. It's important to note that all HART life coaches have done time in prison. This fact establishes their credibility and creates a unique connection to each participant.

Candace Lewis — the heart of the HART team — was not present due to the birth of her child. She was deeply missed, yet all shared in the joy of her new arrival. Congratulations, Candace.

Attending representatives of Mule Creek State Prison included Community Resource Manager Jason Ross; educational instructors M. Chang and G. Karr; and licensed clinical social worker S. Jacques. Media specialists H. Kim and M. Johnson were there to photograph the event.

Sean Gage opened with introductions and heartfelt thanks to Mule Creek's administration and staff. "A special thanks and applause to family members," said Gage. To the graduates he said, "Make this place too small because you've become too big." This was a reference to ARC's mantra: APPRECIATE YOUR DREAMS, THEN STRIVE TO MAKE THEM YOUR REALITIES. BECOME TOO BIG.

"Thanks to all, admin and families, and the inmates who are putting in the work," said Gary Burt.

"I love what I do as my job," said Wajuba McDuffy, who comes back inside

(continued on pg. 2)