MULE CREEK POST

Volume V, Issue VI June 2022

MULE CREEK GRADUATIONS
Mule Creek holds first graduations since COVID-19 put a stop to them
Pages 18-19

Creekside

National LGBTQ Pride Month

YOU'VE GOT TO SEE THESE...
View the photo gallery of some amazing LGBTQ individuals
Pages 17-19

Ione, California Established 2009 www.[illegible]

To Our Readers

By D. Razor Babb, Feature Reporter

WELCOME TO THE June *Mule Creek Post*. This month we examine California's mental health crisis and lack of mental health staff, and highlight a new program of prisoner peer assistance mental health training (pg. 2).

We celebrate LGBTQ Pride Month (pg. 16); attorney Maya Emig provides instruction on coping skills (pg. 13); and discover the healing power of art with Marty Williams (pg. 28).

If you have ever wondered just how small the world is, you won't want to miss Ape Cruces in "Tales from the Creek" (pg. 30). Mule Creek residents will find an abbreviated *Post* on channel 14 beginning this month, for your viewing pleasure, with a return to GTL tablets soon.

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In March 2022, a rally was held at the California State Capitol to increase awareness about mental health staff shortages within the California Correctional Health Care System. At Mule Creek State Prison in Ione, California, mental health staff have been reduced since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing the caseloads for the remaining clinicians. From Left — licensed clinical social worker D. Bowman; Ginger; licensed clinical social worker T. Jacques; Dr. M. Joslin.
(Photo courtesy of T. Jacques)

California's Mental Health Crisis

By Mark Deigan, Post Columnist

DURING THE 1980s, the state of California — in an effort to improve mental health care and save money — closed a number of state-run mental health facilities. The stated goal was to house institutionalized people in community-based care in the places they lived prior to being committed. But it didn't work out that way.

From 1990 through 2010, the lack of adequate mental health care in California became apparent. County jails filled with those in crisis, and those with chronic organic psychological diseases were criminalized, not treated. At one point, the Los Angeles County Jail reported itself the largest provider of mental health care in the country. Many since have come to prison due the lack of effective community-based mental health care. This created exponential growth in the need for mental health care within the prison system for which the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) is responsible.

After numerous legal challenges, the CDCR instituted the Mental Health Services Delivery System (MHSDS) with three levels of care.

- The *Correctional Clinical Case Management System* (CCCMS) is the lowest level of outpatient care.
- The *Enhanced Outpatient Program* (EOP) is the mid-level of care.
- *Mental Health Crisis Bed* (MHCB) is the highest level of care.

In addition, the the CDCR utilizes state mental hospitals when high-level, long-term psychiatric care is needed.

According to several mental health professionals within the CDCR, staffing levels in all mental health care programs at California prisons fall below 50 percent. This lack of staff is due to low pay (see accompanying graph), safety concerns, and the inherent stress of treating violent felons who are mentally ill. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic did not help the situation, for mental health professionals have left the field in droves. This has created a situation where

(continued on pg. 2)