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Austin Baker

OnPoint Community Credit Union and the **Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA)** has announced that six graduating seniors have won scholarships worth up to \$10,000. The awards are part of the 2023 OnPoint Community Credit Union Scholar Program and are double the amount of previous years' scholarships.

The program recognizes graduating scholar athletes and activity scholars from OSAA member schools, receiving more than 350 applications.

One of the four winners of the \$5,000 scholarships was **Austin Baker** of Bend Senior High. Baker captained his basketball, football and lacrosse teams and helped students with disabilities compete in sports through the Unified Sports Program. His Unified Sports Program teammates played in the gold medal match in their division. Baker earned a 4.35 GPA while taking college-level classes through the International Baccalaureate program and is a member of the National Honor Society. Baker will continue his education at Wesleyan University.

All graduating seniors who participate in OSAA activities were eligible to apply for a scholarship. The Scholar Program is part of OnPoint's partnership with OSAA as the title sponsor of the Oregon high school state championships.

OnPoint selected winners based on letters of recommendation and personal essays about their community leadership, classroom success, and how participating in OSAA activities has helped them achieve their goals.

Central Oregon Community College's (COCC) Center for Business, Industry, and Professional Development (CBIPD) welcomes **Dave Grotjahn** as a business advisor and **Keith Sherrill** as the Small Business Program coordinator with the Central Oregon Small Business Development Center.

Grotjahn is a retired senior finance leader from Boeing Commercial Airplane Company with over 34 years of experience. He has led program financial planning and analysis, investments in capital and tooling, investor relations and estimating and pricing strategies. He has also developed long-range business plans and supported compliance and risk management activities for airplane development, sustainability programs, and manufacturing operations. He is also adept at lean manufacturing and process improvement activities.

As a volunteer (treasurer) for a nonprofit organization, he helped restructure the website to improve product visibility and supported tax/financial filings with state and federal agencies along with maintaining 501(c)3 compliance. He is currently providing financial mentorship at Habitat for Humanity for clients seeking home ownership.

Grotjahn holds a finance degree from the University of Washington, an MBA from Seattle University, and is a non-licensed CPA. He is an outdoor enthusiast who lives in Bend with his wife and enjoys skiing, hiking, mountain climbing, golf and time spent with his adult children.

Sherrill is a veteran who trained as a U.S. Army Ranger and served as a special operations aviator. He earned a master's degree in business administration, and following his military service, Sherrill attended an SBA "Boots to Business" transition program which led to his opening of the award-winning HB Brewing in Mobile, Alabama.

Sherrill's experience and hard work will be invaluable in recruiting and advising Central Oregon's small business owners through the Small Business Management program, which is an annual hands-on coaching program for growing businesses.

Sherrill recently moved to Bend with his wife, Grace, and their two children. He's spent some time running and visiting Bend's dog-friendly trails and parks with Poppy, a "nutty" Cavalier King Charles.

Three more employees joined the **Latino Community Association (LCA)** this spring. By coincidence, all three have roots in Guadalajara in the Mexican state of Jalisco, and share a desire to help strengthen the Latino communities of Central Oregon.

Daniel Altamirano Hernández fills a vital role as executive administrative assistant, taking on HR, payroll, program reports and managing donations, and works in the Redmond office. Altamirano Hernández was born in Guadalajara, came to the U.S. at age five and grew up in Redmond. They graduated from Redmond Proficiency Academy and earned their bachelor's degree in social work at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon in 2019. After a gap year with AmeriCorps, they returned to Pacific University and completed a master's in social work.

Altamirano Hernández is a "social worker at core" with a focus on macro social work — investigating the origins and impact of social problems — and social policy. They served as a policy intern and fellow with former Gov. Kate Brown's team. They worked with the houseless community and with low-income first-generation BIPOC students seeking a higher education. During the pandemic, they managed a team of community health workers. They joined the LCA team in April.

Claudia Ruiz Cervantes came on board in the busy Madras LCA office. She grew



Dave Grotjahn



Keith Sherrill



Daniel Altamirano Hernández



Claudia Ruiz Cervantes



Estefanie González

up in Guadalajara and participated in school sports, festivals, music contests, theater, public speaking and student government. She began working in customer service at age 16. She pursued a career in computer science with a specialty in international business. Before coming to the United States, she worked as an executive in one of the most important banks in Mexico.

In 2014, Ruiz Cervantes and her children moved to Madras to live in a safer and more peaceful place. She worked in the fields until she could move up to better employment. She began volunteering with LCA in 2019, and in 2022, she became a navigator in the ALO program (state aid for immigrants who lost work in the pandemic). In early 2023, she helped taxpayers prepare their returns, and in May, LCA hired her as office assistant.

Estefanie González joined the Bend team as a part-time office assistant while she attends college. She was born in Fresno, California, and moved to Bend with her family in 2005. She graduated from Bend High School in 2021 and enrolled full time at COCC. She wants to get her AAOT degree at COCC and then transfer to OSU Cascades and earn a bachelor's degree in human development and family sciences. She looks forward to a career in social work, public health or health education.

González worked in a retail store before she took a job working with the ALO program at LCA's Bend office in September 2022. She helped determine people's eligibility for financial help from loss of work during the pandemic. When that program wrapped up earlier this year, LCA hired her in April to support the work of the Bend office.

The Oregon Veterinary Technician and Assistant Association awarded **Beth Palmer**, director of COCC's veterinary technician program, its Veterinary Technician of the Year Award at the association's recent statewide award ceremony. The honor recognizes "individuals who have gone above and beyond for the veterinary profession, our community and the people in it."

The distinction singled out Palmer's dedication to the profession, her tireless outreach efforts and the volunteer work she does with the Feral Cat Coalition, Central Oregon Cat Alliance and other low-cost spay and neuter clinics staged in underserved communities. It also recognized her devoted work to COCC, where she has helped establish a robust two-year training program that currently holds a 100 percent veterinary technician national exam pass rate.

Before joining COCC as program director and instructor in 2013, Palmer spent 14 years as a certified veterinary technician. She has also worked in emergency animal medicine, shelter medicine and as a technician manager and trainer.

Palmer earned an associate degree in veterinary technology at Portland Community College, a bachelor's degree in professional technical education and instructional design from South Seattle College, and a master's degree in education in instructional design from Western Governors University.



Beth Palmer



Erin Weber

Erin Weber, a financial advisor with **Sherpa Wealth Strategies** in Bend, has successfully passed the rigorous Certified Financial Planner (CFP) exam. Weber also holds the designation of Chartered SRI Counselor, demonstrating her expertise in Socially Responsible Investing (SRI). Her dual qualifications serve as a testament to her dedication to guiding clients towards achieving their financial objectives while aligning with their personal values. Weber joined Sherpa Wealth Strategies in 2019.

Payne Appraisal Services congratulates **Leanna Valdes** for earning her State Certified General Appraiser license. Valdes has been an appraiser assistant with Payne Appraisal Services since 2019 and has been working hard toward her license. She has been a part of the Central Oregon community since 2009 and brings excellent research skills to this company. With 300 hours of appraisal class work and more than 3,000 hours of qualified work experience under her belt, she is well prepared to start serving the appraisal needs of Central Oregon as a certified general appraiser.



Leanna Valdes



Ann Witsil

BendFilm welcomes Interim Executive Director **Ann Witsil**. Witsil has lived with her family in Central Oregon for more than 15 years and is thrilled to be working with the talented, professional BendFilm team and community volunteers, especially for this milestone 20th anniversary year.

As an organizational development consultant and interim executive director in both the nonprofit and for-profit sectors, Witsil has led diverse teams in the performing arts, social justice, and environmental arenas through transitions and growth. Previously, Witsil was an executive with U.S. Bancorp and with Nike Equipment during periods of business diversification and expansion. She is a lover and supporter of the arts — written, spoken, visual and performing — and thrives on exploring trails, rivers, wilderness and different cultures. Witsil has lived with her family in Central Oregon for more than 15 years and is thrilled to be working with the talented, professional BendFilm team and community volunteers, especially for this milestone 20th anniversary year.

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The Bend Chamber, in partnership with **Taylor Northwest**, announced the Leadership Bend Class of 2023 graduates. Twenty-eight outstanding individuals formally graduated from the Leadership Bend program on June 15, 2023.

These participants come from a wide variety of backgrounds and industries, and differing lengths of time living in Central Oregon.

What they all have in common is a commitment to Bend and our region, and a willingness to work collaboratively to create a strong future for all. Over nine months, they spent more than 90 class hours learning about local challenges and opportunities firsthand from decision makers, and through interactive work. They additionally completed three impact projects outside of class hours and carved out time to connect and nurture their relationships with each other.

The Leadership Bend Class of 2023 is **Amanda Bird-Zimmerman** — Old Mill District, **Zavier Borja** — State of Oregon, **Peter Bozin** — Parametrix, **Kate Burns** — Merrill O'Sullivan, LLP, **Trever Campbell** — Kernutt Stokes, LLP, **Lisa Clark** — Bureau of Land Management, **Gary Crockett** — SELCO Community Credit Union, **Savanna DeLuca** — Wild Heart Therapy + Consulting, **Theresa Drulard** — St. Charles Health System, **Shawn Evilsizor** — Morrison-Maierle, **Lindsay Gardner** — Bryant Lovlien & Jarvis P.C., **Bess Goggins** — Boys & Girls Clubs of Bend, **Bradley Howk** — Partners in Care, **Emma James** — Rosell Wealth Management, **Ted Jones** — U.S. Bank, **Emily Kirk** — Central Oregon Daily News, **Kris Knight** — Upper Deschutes Watershed Council, **Jennifer Kovitz** — COCC, **Michael Leeland** — Hayden Homes, **Gil Levy** — KIDS Center, **Cyrus Mooney** — Bend Chamber, **Michael Nelson** — Sazan Group, **Lynn Spinoglio** — First Interstate Bank, **Dan Stake** — Mid Oregon Credit Union, **Patricia Strange** — Otak, **Frank Thaxter** — TEN OVER STUDIO, **Dana Wilson** — City of Bend and **Chad Young** — Skanska USA Building.

Compass Commercial Real Estate Services announces two new Certified Commercial Investment Member (CCIM) designations for **Kristie Schmitt** and **Grant Schultz**. Brokers with the CCIM certification are recognized as experts in their field, specializing in financial, market and investment analysis. Both Schmitt and Schultz obtained this prestigious designation in April 2023 at the CCIM conference held in Boston. Their knowledge and professionalism throughout their careers, coupled with their attainment of the certification, further solidify their position as industry experts.

Schmitt joined Compass Commercial in 2019 with a proven track record as a

business development professional. Throughout her career, she has successfully closed numerous commercial transactions, including Compass Commercial's Largest Sale Transaction of the Year in 2019 and 2020, as well as the Largest Lease Transaction of the Year in 2020.

Schultz joined Compass Commercial in 2017 after honing his skills at Capacity Commercial Group in Portland. Schultz was awarded Compass Commercial's Largest Lease Transaction of the Year award in 2017, in addition to the Largest Sale Transaction of the Year in 2017 and 2021. In 2021, he was a part of the broker team to be awarded the EnCOAR Commercial Transaction of the Year award.

The CCIM designation has been leading the commercial real estate credential for more than 50 years. It often takes two to five years to complete, followed by a comprehensive six-hour exam that combines real-world experience and coursework. With the addition of Schmitt and Schultz, Compass Commercial now boasts a total of nine CCIM designees.

Out Killing Indians by Oregon author **Rick Steber** has been chosen as the international Grand Prize Winner by the Indie Book Awards. Presentation of the trophy and a cash prize of \$1,500 will take place at the gala reception to be held at the Newberry Library in Chicago. The Indie Book Awards is one of the largest and most prestigious awards in the literary industry.

Steber, long considered the voice of High Desert country, has over 50 titles under his belt and more than two million books in print. He has won many national and international awards and five of his books have been optioned for movies. He is a keen observer of the evolving American West and articulates these changes in prose and poems that are boldly descriptive, invigorating and spectacularly creative.

COCC's Chandler Lecture Series recently received its first National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant, a \$60,000 award that will be used to develop and host six humanities-focused presentations on topics of journalism, social justice, literature, art and other content. COCC's award was part of a new NEH award category called Spotlight on Humanities in Higher Education, and it was one of just 30 such grants awarded across the country — COCC was one of only three community colleges selected.

The Chandler Lecture Series, a COCC Foundation program since 1985, brings renowned speakers and experts to the region to deliver programming on a diverse range of educational and topical subjects, typically offered at a low cost or free to the community, and always free to students.

Revealed at the NEH's recent funding cycle announcement, the grant represents one of just 258 awards presented this year by the organization, first started in 1965.

The Nancy R. Chandler Lecture Series of the COCC Foundation has hosted many distinguished speakers over the years, including Ndaba Mandela, activist grandson of Nelson Mandela; Lulu Garcia-Navarro, journalist; Jelani Cobb, writer and educator; and Maya Angelou, Pulitzer Prize-nominated writer and activist. The series was established by the late Robert W. Chandler Sr. to honor his wife Nancy.



(L-R) KRISTIE SCHMITT AND GRANT SCHULTZ | PHOTO COURTESY OF COMPASS COMMERCIAL



PHOTO | COURTESY OF COCC

Businesses Serving Community

JERICHO ROAD

The Cow Creek Foundation has awarded Jericho Road of Redmond, \$10,000 to help support their food programs helping hungry students and families.

"Jericho Road appreciates the support of the Cow Creek Umpqua Foundation. Support like this is necessary to our food programs that provide bags of food for students of the Redmond School District as well as the Head Start children in our area", said Dr. Mark Keener, president of Jericho Road's Board of Directors. "The wonderful thing is that we now have student volunteers helping to fill those bags that reach children and families in Redmond, Tumalo, Terrebonne and Crooked River Ranch areas".

"Our food programs provide 15,000 servings and food supplies a year at a cost of \$80,000," Dr. Keener continued. "This food is critical for the health and well-being of children and families struggling in our communities."

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New hires, promotions,
 accolades, awards, retiring?
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