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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Woodland Man Graduates from Addiction Intervention Court

(Woodland, CA) – May 29, 2019 – On May 28, 2019, 28-year-old Woodland resident Steven Alcaraz successfully graduated from Addiction Intervention Court in Department 14 of the Yolo County Superior Court.

Addiction Intervention Court (AIC) is a specialty court program that serves up to 15 individuals who struggle with substance use disorders and are involved in the criminal justice system as a result of their addiction. The program is a collaborative effort between the Yolo County District Attorney's Office, the Yolo County Superior Court, the Public Defender, the Probation Department, and Health and Human Services Agency. The program provides intensive support services and supervision aimed at increasing a participant's overall quality of life while reducing recidivism.

On November 11, 2014 at approximately 11:35 pm., Mr. Alcaraz was arrested by the Woodland Police Department after burglarizing the home of friends who were letting him stay at their house. His crime resulted from the many years of being addicted to illegal drugs. He was referred to Addiction Intervention Court. His first day in that court was May 7, 2017. Initially, Mr. Alcaraz was not invested in the program and only was participating to avoid a State Prison sentence. As the months passed and with the support of the AIC team, Mr. Alcaraz became a believer and fully surrendered himself to the program. As a result of his dedicated efforts, he became a shining example for others in the program, leading up to his graduation this week. Mr. Alcaraz is also the first AIC graduate to participate in the restorative justice process where he made amends to all his victims by writing them letters, including the Woodland Police Department officer who arrested him.

Judge David Rosenberg, who presides over AIC, invited team members to offer comments and congratulations to Mr. Alcaraz. Deputy Probation Officer Stephen Svetich stated that he has known Mr. Alcaraz for over 13 years at a time when he was

still a minor. He told Mr. Alcaraz “You have come such a long way. From now on, I only want to see you with the other AIC graduates or at your work.” Deputy Public Defender Bret Bandley and Health and Human Services Forensic Clinical Supervisor Kristi Abbott both congratulated Mr. Alcaraz and praised him for his hard work.

Chief Deputy District Attorney Jonathan Raven commented on the Restorative Justice essay written by Mr. Alcaraz where he stated that when he entered AIC, he had a hopeless mindset, and the thought processes of a child, addict and criminal. Raven continued by telling Mr. Alcaraz “you stated in your essay that you now live life righteously and honestly and I can see this is completely true.” Raven concluded, “your team at HHSA and Probation has done an amazing job of supporting you. Please know you can reach out to them in the future.” Next, Judge Rosenberg welcomed Woodland PD Lt. Aaron Delao. Delao told Mr. Alcaraz “we as police officers are public servants. We cannot arrest our way out of a problem. We have a societal and humanistic responsibility. This is so impactful for me to be able to celebrate your accomplishments.”

Numerous friends, past AIC graduates and family members attended the celebration. Mr. Alcarazes’ grandmother told him that she “always believed in him and knew he could do it. I’ve always felt you could be such a strong role model, not just because I’m your Nana.” Mr. Alcarazes’ cousins, siblings and parents also offered their congratulations and praise.

Finally, it was Mr. Alcarazes’ turn to speak. “It took a very long time to realize that I was addicted. Today I think clearly and think before I act. Today I have the tools and resources and it’s a totally different lifestyle that I have chosen to live.”

Finally, Judge Rosenberg presented a certificate to Mr. Alcaraz and praised him for his hard work and dedication. After the graduation, Mr. Alcaraz and his family and friends, team members and other AIC participants celebrated by eating cake and pizza.

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