



COUNTY OF YOLO
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
JEFF W. REISIG, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Collaborative Program - Steps to Success - Holds Graduation Ceremony

(Woodland, CA) – September 5, 2019 -- Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig announced that four Yolo County residents graduated from the Steps to Success (S2S) diversion program on August 28, 2019. The well-attended ceremony, honoring Jose Maldonado, Jose Mariscal, Dennis Cortopassi and Javier Padilla, was held in Woodland. S2S is a voluntary diversion program that uses restorative justice as well as trauma-informed care principles and practices to provide treatment and wrap-around services. The program serves Yolo County residents who are facing misdemeanor or felony criminal charges related to their mental health and/or substance use condition. Successful participants reintegrate into the community after addressing their treatment needs while also avoiding criminal convictions which can often be an impediment to future employment and housing stability.

CommuniCare Case Manager Rosemary Parker introduced each of the graduates in attendance. She described their personal development, engagement and progress over time and recognized the steps they'd taken towards self-sufficiency.

Graduate Dennis Cortopassi told the audience how helpful the District Attorney Neighborhood Court volunteers were during his restorative justice conference. He described using tools listed in his contract such as placing a poster on his refrigerator reminding him to take his medication, get sleep, use coping skills, and keep a positive attitude. He also distributed cards to friends and colleagues, listing people they could call if he exhibited any of the listed symptoms on the card. He concluded by recognizing the level of collaboration between CommuniCare, volunteers and county agencies that supported him in this program.

Sara Gavin, the Chief Behavioral Health Officer for CommuniCare Health Centers, commented, "The Steps to Success program is effective because multiple systems actively participate and community partners are fully engaged. We have seen this truly collaborative program lead to profound change in our graduates, and we know helping them achieve their individual goals helps strengthen our community as a whole."

Public Defender Tracie Olson stated, “I am very proud of the individuals who have graduated today. With support and services, these individuals are contributing members of the community without the barriers that could bar housing and meaningful employment. Congratulations are in order for the graduates.”

District Attorney Jeff Reisig told the graduates that, “This is a program that gives individuals a second, third and fourth chance to make themselves productive members of their communities by addressing unmet treatment needs.”

The Steps to Success program is a collaborative effort between the Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency, District Attorney’s Office, Probation Department, Public Defender’s Office and three community-based organizations: CommuniCare, Empower Yolo, and Legal Services of Northern California. This program is funded by a Proposition 47 grant in the amount of \$5,968,215 managed by the Board of State and Community Corrections.

Neighborhood Court is seeking volunteers to participate in the restorative justice conferences. Individuals with loved ones suffering from mental illness or substance use disorder are particularly encouraged to participate. For additional information on this program, please visit www.yoloda.org/nc, email Nicole.Kirkaldy@yolocounty.org or call 530.666.8378.

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