

José Balcazar

Veteran & Business Adviser at Central Oregon Community College's SBDC

José Balcazar is currently the Veteran Business Adviser at Central Oregon Community College's Small Business Development Center. José has been a wonderful asset to our Center, mostly working hard behind the scenes, so it's a pleasure for us to be able to feature him front and center as a Veteran, proud father, and much-valued colleague.

Born in Mexico City, José migrated to the United States at the age of 18 and graduated from Hermiston High School in Oregon. In 1998, José enlisted in the Army and was awarded the Distinguished Honor Graduate Award, several Certificates of Achievement, the Military Excellence Award and the Army Achievement Medal.

After completing his Enduring Freedom deployment, he received an honorable discharge. Post deployment, José went on to own several companies and raise his two children, Dylan & Kelsey, in Central Oregon. His most visible (and very popular!) business locally was a successful Mexican restaurant that he owned and operated in Bend for over 17 years.

Once his son and daughter were solidly established in school, José reenlisted on the 4th of July. Son Dylan is now grown and is following in his father's footsteps as a graduate from US Air Force training. The two of them were both recently assigned to the same hospital when members of the Oregon Air and Army National Guards began working to support clinical staff across the state during the latest coronavirus surge. We'd like to thank José for his service not only to the country, but to his fellow Oregonians during such a difficult time. In José's words:

"Not my first deployment but definitely a different one; we always train to be ready in case we are needed and we become experts at our jobs. But on this unique deployment we were needed for something very different from what we knew, with the struggles of learning the terminology when a nurse asked for something, and seeing a very different part of the hospital from what I've seen or imagined it was. Sometimes I felt like I wasn't able to do enough to help, because we didn't have any medical training, but hearing from the staff every day how grateful they were that we went to help, and how now they were able to multitask thanks to our help with the non-medical support, I have all the meaning and boost we needed to keep going. Also, it was a good experience to have gone in a deployment with my son, and I know now he understands more why we chose to serve the country and the community."

¡Gracias José & Dylan!