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Addiction expert, Army Ranger Hall of Fame Special Ops Soldier lead DLI Classes

Jeff Anderson - Special to The Times
Saturday January 27, 2018
Front Page Feature Column

The Dynamic Learning Institute announces two upcoming classes relevant to what's going on in today's world. Lifelong learning involves the ongoing voluntary pursuit of knowledge that leads to active citizenship and the self-sustainability of our values. More than 320 people have already participated in the first three DLI classes.

This first class will focus on learning positive citizenship insights into the

growing issue of chemical addiction. The second class will look behind the veil of military special forces operations that protect the free world and sustain our national values.

Understanding addiction

"When it comes to understanding addiction, most people are doing the exact opposite of what they should be doing," said Chris Daniel, an addiction counselor at La Hacienda Treatment Center in Hunt, who will present a DLI class from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on Feb. 6, at the Dietert Center, 451 Guadalupe St.

One in eight people today meet the clinical definition of chemical addiction, making it vital for family and friends to learn to better understand addiction and how to shape their own responses to those they care about, Daniel said.

"In chemical addiction, people are obsessed with using substances, while their families become obsessed with fixing them," he said.

He offered insights into his own family.

"My own mother was an alcoholic beginning when I was 14 until her death 38 years later. She was a wonderful woman who was destroyed by an addiction to alcohol, which neither I nor the family understood for many years," Daniel said. "She went through over 20 treatment attempts in her life. I never understood what she was going through until possibly late in her life."

"We could have saved myself, our family and my mother a lot of pain, anguish, worry and fear had we known at the beginning what we know now."

Many people understand addiction as a behavioral problem. When they respond from this perspective, it often makes the addiction problem and family dynamics around addiction worse, he said.

"People with addictions are not bad people who need to start acting right. They are people with a disease that need help to get well," he said. "We will each be better citizens if we develop positive responses to understanding addiction." In his DLI class "Understanding Chemical Addiction and Recovery," Daniel will help participants learn how addiction and recovery works, so they will know how to better support family and friends with their addiction recovery.

Daniel is a professional counselor of exceptional faith and a teacher with simple yet profound insights that cut through the dysfunctional circumstances surrounding chemical addictions.

He authored "The Little Book — Alcohol and Drug Addiction Made Simple."

With his blend of counseling, prayer and personal experiences, he has brought understanding, healing and freedom to thousands of adults, adolescents and their families struggling with alcoholism/drug addiction, anxiety and depression, grief, abuse and other traumas.

This class will help participants understand the fear, confusion, manipulation, lying, hurt, pain, inadequacy, shame, powerlessness and loneliness of their addictions and how it's possible for each person to move forward to find understanding, love, care, freedom and strength in recovery.

Hall of Fame Army Ranger

Tommy Shook, a retired sergeant major, served in U.S. Special Forces, including the Green Berets, Pathfinders, Paratroopers and Elite Army Rangers.

In 2016, he was recognized as a best of the best with his induction into the Army Ranger Hall of Fame.

He will lead the DLI class "An Army Ranger Shares Experiences from Across the Globe in Special Forces Operations"

from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Feb. 8 at the Dietert Center.

Class participants will learn firsthand from a leader who assumed responsibilities at the tip of the spear of the rapidly evolving challenges of the war on terror and nuclear warfare.

Learn from his combat service in the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq, which included parachuting atomic bombs.

Shook said he hopes class participants will take away from his DLI class an understanding of U.S. Army Special Operations soldiers, including history that led up to world events, and differences in Special Operations units such as Paratroopers, Pathfinders, Army Rangers, Special Forces and Green Berets.

He also will discuss capabilities, limitations, national leadership expectations, education, schooling, training and allied interchanges, plus employment after special ops service, disabilities and the prices that families pay.

Shook grew up the son of tenant farmers, and his experiences prepared him for the rigors of a Special Operations soldier. Once qualified, he continued to seek the education required for special assignments. Many assignments were voluntary.

"We could quit any day we wanted to, but the fact that we had volunteered for the unit afforded the bosses to volunteer us for any task, anywhere, at any time. We could still refuse the task, but that would have eliminated us from that unit. I never entertained the idea of terminating my status," Shook said. "In contrast, I fought with all my might to stay in the specialized units, because it was my fit, and I could not tolerate being in a lesser oriented mission. If there was a shot in

the world fired in anger, I wanted to be there. So, mental and physical conditioning were paramount for me and the men that worked for me."

When asked about lifelong learning, Shook responded that "self-motivated, ongoing learning was essential to their self-sustainability."

He would tell the men that worked for him "Your physical fitness is absolutely imperative to work for me. If you cannot make it to the target, then all of the technical knowledge in the world will not help me. If you want to work for me, then understand that if there is a shot fired in anger anywhere in the world, I am going to answer that shot, and you are going to be with me, so be prepared physically and mentally."

Darcie and Mark Mosier will serve as DLI hosts for the evening.

Dynamic Learning Institute

DLI is a Kerrville community partnership between the Dietert Center's Club Ed, Schreiner University, SERV Kerrville and the Dynamic Learning Institute Board of Directors.

Dynamic Learning aims to provide the Kerrville area with fun, interactive and stimulating learning experiences.

The DLI board hopes many community residents will join it in discovering the joy of learning from dynamic instructors with a lifetime of subject experiences to share. There are no tests, no grades and no papers — just the opportunity to explore interesting topics and develop new interests.

DLI Chairman Jeff Anderson is the servant pastor of SERV Kerrville, a nonprofit collaborating with community partners to empower lifelong learning.

Upcoming DLI classes

- Tuesday: "Write Your Book Now"
- Thursday: "How Hitler's Illnesses Helped the Allies Win World War II"
- Feb. 6: "Understanding Chemical Addiction"
- Feb. 8: "Experiences of an Army Ranger Hall of Fame Soldier"

Classes are from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Dietert Center. The cost for each of these classes is \$20 per person.

Register by calling 792-4044, Mondays through Fridays, or sign up any time online at www.ClubEd.net.

Scholarships are available, so if cost is an issue in determining whether to participate, email Read2Win@ServKerrville.com.