

A PROBATION SUCCESS STORY

CATALINA HINOJOSA AND THE ROAD TO THE SAN PEDRO RECOVERY ALLIANCE

"Probation played a big role in my success, and I admire them with all my heart."
 ~ Catalina Hinojosa

In 1992, after the unfortunate passing of her mother, Catalina Hinojosa found herself lost, struggling, and turning to drugs to cope. As a result, she was arrested in 2012 and incarcerated for transporting. Ms. Hinojosa entered the justice system and, at the time, faced up to nine years in prison. "Before my mother's death, I was on a good path, but afterward, I just lost it," explained Ms. Hinojosa.

She decided to change her life during her incarceration and six months of sobriety. To keep herself busy while in custody, she became active in church and often helped other detainees with various tasks. "I became serious about changing my life because I was not going to come back out and be that same person. So, I made up my mind," declared Hinojosa. After 2 years of good behavior, her sentence was minimized, and she was allowed to transfer to Chino Institution for Women (CIW). During her time at CIW, she earned her GED, started college, became an usher in church, and continued to help others.

One afternoon, she had an epiphany and asked herself, why couldn't she get a job outside that was like what she had been doing on the inside? With that thought ever-present in her mind, she began to visualize what her life would look like after release. And during her 12-step program, she was asked to compose a letter about her vision. After writing the letter, she was accepted into the El Monte Walden Houses Alternative Custody Program.

Ms. Hinojosa was incarcerated for 4½ years. Afterward, she participated in an outside treatment program for a year. Upon her release, she worked as a merchandise worker with Homeboy Industries for 18 ½ months. Homeboy also gave Ms. Hinojosa the option to intern for a Homeless program at "Project 180."

Upon re-entry into the community, she immediately began working with her AB-109 Deputy Probation Officer, Mr. Serrano. "Mr. Serrano was amazing. He was always very supportive," expressed Ms. Hinojosa. "He encouraged me the entire time I was on probation, and with every milestone I accomplished, he'd tell me how excited he was for me. That meant a lot."

At times, DPO Serrano would visit Ms. Hinojosa at her job, often offering her positive words of encouragement. "This is an officer of the court. He was a big positive person in my life at that time, providing encouragement that I needed," Ms. Hinojosa shared. "I really owe a lot of my success to Mr. Serrano, who helped me my first time being out on the streets. I could call him when I was stressed, and he'd listen and make time for me, which matters. He is a total humanitarian."

In collaboration with the Breaking Barriers program, DPO Serrano was instrumental in acquiring subsidized funding and finding Ms. Hinojosa permanent housing after living in a sober living home. He submitted a referral and followed up to ensure she got an interview. As a result, she received her housing voucher within two weeks.

[Click to watch the Success Story video](#)



Catalina Hinojosa



San Pedro Recovery Alliance team with LA County Supervisor Janice Hahn



Continued on next page

A PROBATION SUCCESS STORY (CONT)

CATALINA HINOJOSA AND THE ROAD TO THE SAN PEDRO RECOVERY ALLIANCE

"Ms. Hinojosa's desire to help the homeless shows her big loving heart. The fact that Mrs. Hinojosa believed in herself and is now on the other end of the table demonstrates that anyone who never quits can achieve their dreams."

– Deputy Probation Officer II Serrano



(L to R): Catalina Hinojosa, Kari Ashcroft-Assistant Director
Ginger Dearborn- 3rd chair board member

"He was wearing a badge, but he put a human face to the badge," explained Ms. Hinojosa. "Between Mr. Serrano and my case manager at Breaking Barriers, we did it!"

DPO Serrano shared, "Like most clients, Mrs. Hinojosa struggled once released from prison but was able to adapt to society and AB-109 quickly. The key to Ms. Hinojosa's success was that she listened and followed through with the guidance and instructions given." Mr. Serrano continued, "AB-109 was able to provide Ms. Hinojosa with transitional housing and a place to live once she completed (Breaking Barriers) AB-109."

Because of Ms. Hinojosa's lived experience, she can relate to others walking her same journey. She often encounters people striving to get their lives back on track. Ms. Hinojosa offers them trusted guidance and assists them in turning their lives in a more positive and productive direction. "I model Mr. Serrano when working with my current clients," said Ms. Hinojosa.

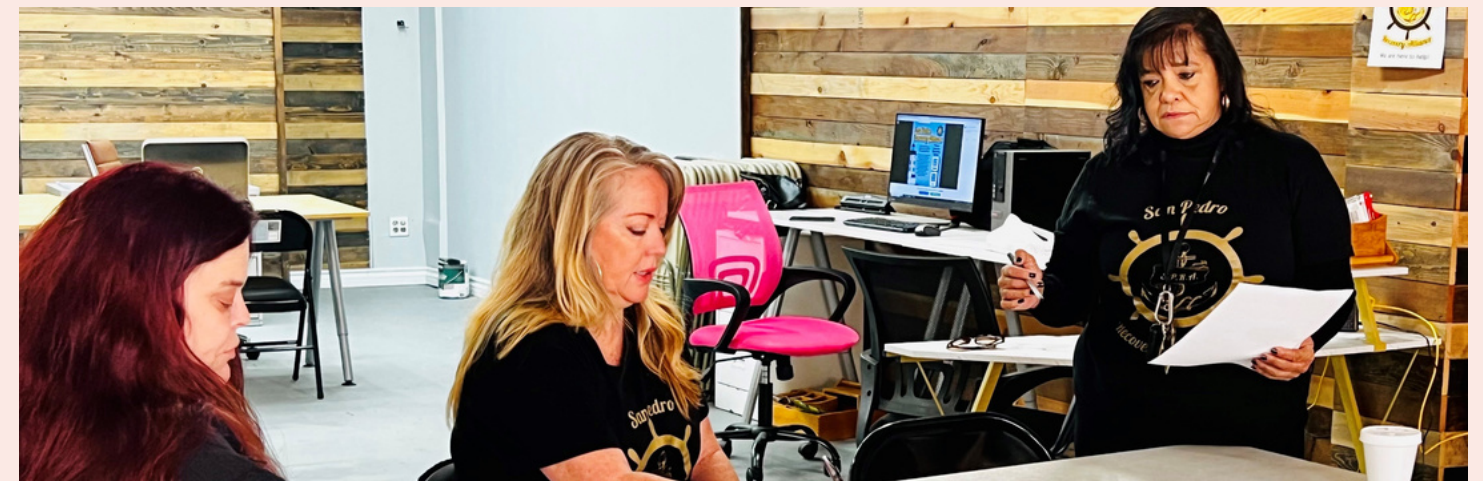
Through hard work, determination, and motivation from people like DPO Serrano, Ms. Hinojosa is now the Founder and CEO of "San Pedro Recovery Alliance," located at 819 S. Pacific Ave. San Pedro, CA 90731. "When you do good, good comes to you," expressed Catalina. And she is doing good.

San Pedro Recovery Alliances' mission is to provide transitional housing and re-entry services for those transitioning from homelessness, prison, or treatment facilities. They perform outreach services and meet the needs of the homeless community aiding with housing, medical services, job services, government benefits, mental health solutions, and food resources.

Through San Pedro Recovery Alliance, Ms. Hinojosa is bridging the gap between justice-involved individuals and their re-entry into the community. "I can collaborate with probation officers and others I've met along the way. I now work with them to find housing for their clients," explained Ms. Hinojosa. "That's what we do. Probation helped me, so I help them."

Thank you, Ms. Hinojosa, for sharing your success story. The Los Angeles County Probation Department salutes you!

Probation News



(L to R): Kari Ashcroft-Assistant Director, Ginger Dearborn- 3rd chair board member, Catalina Hinojosa