

CAPIA HONORS SENIOR DSO ALBERT GONZALEZ WITH JERRY DARLING AWARD

"GONZO" RECEIVES AWARD AT BEACHSIDE LUNCHEON

On November 17, 2021, Senior Detention Services Officer Albert Gonzalez was honored by the California Association of Probation Institution Administrators (CAPIA) and was presented with the 2021 Jerry Darling Award. Those nominated for this prestigious award are individuals devoted to the highest principles in the operation of juvenile institutions and for their contributions to the field. Senior DSO Gonzales truly epitomizes each of the aforementioned characteristics and attributes.

Overlooking the breathtaking Pacific Ocean and surrounded by family, colleagues, and friends, Mr. Gonzalez was presented with this well-deserved award during a luncheon at The Cliffs Hotel in beautiful Shell Beach, CA.

"I plan to retire this coming March, so receiving this award means a lot to me. It's nice to be recognized because I love my job and have continued in my career because I like doing it." Shared Mr. Gonzalez. "I've done a lot for our department. I've received some awards and certificates over the years. However, I feel this honor is a fitting tribute to the collection of work I've done. It encapsulates my work with the department, and I'm grateful."

Senior DSO Gonzalez, affectionately known to his colleagues as "Gonzo," began his career with the probation department over 21 years ago at the recommendation of a church friend. "He told me that I'd be great working with the kids. So, I applied, tested, and was hired."



Senior DSO Albert Gonzalez

"The department desires to see employees exhibit patience, policy adherence, positive engagement with youth, peers, team members, etc. Officer Gonzalez models all these attributes. He always displays his professionalism and ethics,"

- Director Pharaoh Bacon

"During Officer Gonzalez' 21 years of service, he has dedicated his time and skills to making the experience for detained youth at Central Juvenile Hall safer and more rewarding," Director Bacon shared. "He goes above and beyond the call of duty both at work and in the community. He is extremely well-respected by all the facility as well as by his peers and Superior-Ranked Officers."

Throughout his career, Senior DSO Gonzalez completed countless feats with the department and has been titled a master trainer by many of his peers. He is a certified instructor for CPR First Aid, Sexual Harassment, PREA, Institutional Searches, Ethics for Professionals, and Suicide Prevention. Additionally, in 2005, Officer Gonzalez was the recipient of "The Officer of the Year Award." He has also been the recipient of "The Officer of The Month Award" on three occasions.

Officer Gonzalez says the motivation behind his commitment and dedication to his work is seeing changes in the youth. Over the years, he has mentored numerous young people and guided them through applying for college, applying for financial aid, and starting a business.

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“As a Christian, I believe my work is an extension of my ministry. I’m able to reach out and help disadvantaged youth and point them in a direction that will make them prosper. I learn from them as much as they learned from me,” he shared.

Whether it be hosting a poster contest for national holidays or coordinating outside organizations to display custom cars and motorcycles, Mr. Gonzalez’s creativity is limitless when exposing the youth to new experiences and broadening their thinking. Most recently, he started an astronomy club for the youth that he facilitates. Because of his creativity, his shift has the lowest of incidents at Central Juvenile Hall, pre and during the pandemic.

Director Pharoah Bacon expressed, “Senior Officer Gonzalez is an officer that always displays his professionalism and ethics. He trains, coaches, and mentors. He is firm but fair. All who know him know that he genuinely cares about the job and all who he meets.”



Albert Gonzalez with Probation Department colleagues.



Albert Gonzalez and family

Officer Gonzalez was a staff training instructor for approximately five years. After retiring, he says that he would love to be remembered for training over 200 staff in the Los Angeles County Probation Department. Chuckling as he shared, “even now, people say if you want to be trained properly, get trained by Gonzo. Years from now, I want my colleagues to remember me for being the best trainer. I’ll toot my own horn. I think I was the best STC instructor out of all the juvenile halls.”

he CAPIA Jerry Darling Award was named after a long-time consultant with the California Youth Authority. Jerry Darling was instrumental in the development of programs and standards in juvenile institutions. His compassion and concern for the children in institutions were as great as his warmth for his fellow man and fellow professionals. He was a leader in the field.

Like Jerry Darling, Senior Detention Services Officer Albert Gonzalez epitomizes what it is to be an honorable, ethical, innovative, and compassionate leader. His heartfelt servant leadership style will forever be remembered by the staff and young people he mentored and served. CAPIA could not have selected a more deserving recipient of this honor.

The memorable occasion concluded with Officer Gonzalez offering words of gratitude. “I want to thank Los Angeles County Probation Department, not only for giving me a job but for giving me a career. Something that I can be proud of and something that I can look forward to every day and do my best. I was born for this, to help people,” he declared. “I couldn’t have found a better job. All my previous jobs help prepare me for what I’m doing today, and I thank God for always coming to work with me.”

Congratulations, Senior Detention Services Officer Albert Gonzalez. Your legacy will be forever remembered within the Los Angeles County Probation Department and throughout the great state of California. We salute you!