



COUNTY OF YOLO

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Probation Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

(Woodland, CA) – In keeping with National Volunteer Appreciation week (April 15-21) the Yolo County Probation Department held their first annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner last Thursday in the Atrium of the Erwin W. Meier Administration Building. This special event was held to honor, thank, and recognize the longevity and dedication of those individuals and organizations who donate time and funds to minors who are confined in the juvenile detention facility. Of note, Holy Rosary Juvenile Hall Ministry was chosen for a special recognition with a resolution signed by the Yolo County Board of Supervisors, declaring April 19th as Juvenile Hall Ministry Day.

“Youth in our care and custody have the opportunity to turn their lives around, and the presence of a consistent, caring adult can help them make better choices,” said Yolo County Board of Supervisors Chair Mariko Yamada. “We commend this ten-year public-private partnership.”

The Juvenile Hall Ministry was founded in 1997 when Father John Boll of the Holy Rosary Parrish in Woodland asked for volunteers to visit the minors held in juvenile hall. Mrs. M. J. Nealon, and eight others, approached the Yolo County Probation Department ultimately making arrangements to start a visitation program three nights a week. Volunteers talked with the minors, listened to them, helped them write letters, and participated in recreational activities. Later, volunteers began bringing in home-baked cookies for birthday celebrations, and mending clothing. Today, the ministry has grown to over eighty members who provide snack food, money for haircuts, books and bibles, and who sponsor celebrations on major holidays. Funding for the ministry comes from Friends of the Woodland Library, the Givannetti family, and the Yolo County Office of Education.

“The juvenile justice system owes its very existence to volunteers,” said Don L. Meyer, Yolo County Chief Probation Officer. “We here in Yolo County continue to reap the benefits of an ongoing collaboration with the citizens of our community. The minors, the community, and the Probation Department all benefit from our volunteers’ commitment to serve those less fortunate in our society.”

Other volunteer groups recognized by the Yolo County Probation Department included College Conference Facilitators, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Church on the Rock, and members of various other local churches. Guest speakers at the event were former Olympian and lightweight boxing champion, Vicente Escobedo, and NFL running back, Quinton Ganther.

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