



COUNTY OF YOLO
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
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District Attorney and Chief of Police Partner with Glide to Increase Empathy in Addressing Homelessness Issues

Members of Law Enforcement spent two days at the Glide Church in the SF Tenderloin District

(Woodland, CA) – September 16, 2019 – During the dates of September 10-12, 2019, police officers, prosecutors, an investigator, a victim advocate, and other leaders in the criminal justice community from California and Oregon attended a training at the Glide Church in the Tenderloin District of San Francisco. This “21st Century Leadership Training” was billed as an immersion experience for public safety and civil leaders who are addressing issues of homelessness, addiction, mental illness, poverty and despair in their communities. From Yolo County, Supervising Deputy District Attorney, Garrett Hamilton attended along with Lieutenant Kevin Skaife. Additionally, in attendance were Asst. District Attorney Jay Boyarsky and a victim services advocate from the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office, members of the University of Oregon Police Dept., and two San Francisco police officers.

Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig coordinated this program with University of Oregon Police Chief Matt Carmichael and Rabbi Michael Lezak of the Glide Church. Reisig stated, “This training is intended to help leaders explore their understanding of the ways we all work together to serve challenged communities to improve the quality of life for all of our citizens. Put more simply, we want to build better empathy for police and prosecutors, in particular, when working with the homeless.”

“Learning how to connect with our communities happens in our communities,” Chief Carmichael said. “Just like Glide itself, this program teaches us and reminds us that we serve everyone, without reservation.”

In December, 2017, Reisig and his Chief Deputy Jonathan Raven visited the Glide Church. As part of the two-day program, the group toured the Tenderloin and served lunch to hundreds of people seeking services from Glide. They were then invited to join the homeless population for lunch. They stood in line with them and they all sat around the lunch table together, enjoying their lunch.

This professional development program was designed to provide criminal justice professionals and civic leaders a unique perspective on the skills necessary to deliver an effective level of service to our diverse and complex communities. The non-traditional leadership program provides attendees an opportunity to learn and grow as leaders through the immersion experience in a deeply troubled neighborhood. It may also empower local leaders to return to their communities with new thoughts, ideas and tools needed to

address local challenges. Those invited to attend include, Police Officers, Firefighters, Emergency medical technicians, Prosecutors, Judges, Public Defenders and Victim Advocates.

L.A. Times columnist Nita Lelyveld was there for the entire course, and she wrote about the experience in a column that ran Saturday. "Imagine that you are homeless, that you have no money, that you have spent the night wary and watchful, huddled on hard city sidewalk. Imagine that you are exhausted. Feel how your hunger gnaws. Join the line for a free lunch that stretches down the block. ... This is what a small group made up mostly of prosecutors and police officers was challenged to do this week in an extraordinary immersion course designed to expand empathy. I was invited to witness them doing it. And as I joined them in experiencing life on the streets of San Francisco's Tenderloin, I did it too, because how could I not?" You can find the entire story at: <https://lat.ms/2kzTtk9>

Hamilton stated that "Going to GLIDE was tough but also enriching. The scale of suffering on the streets of the Tenderloin is huge. Rabbi Lezak and the staff teach that the GLIDE response is to meet the challenge with compassion." Skaife said that "It was a unique and impactful experience that served as a reminder of how complex the issues of homelessness and addiction are in our society. Being immersed in the environment and hearing different perspectives gives me an alternate lens to view these issues in our community."

Reisig, Chief Carmichael and Rabbi Lezak are pleased with the success of the immersion program and will continue to plan for future trainings at the Glide Church.

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