

**2020 ANNUAL  
CPOC AWARDS CEREMONY**

**December 3, 2020**

**12:30pm**





## **MASTER OF CEREMONIES**

President - Chief Brian Richart  
El Dorado County

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## **2020 CPOC AWARDS COMMITTEE**

Chair – Chief Steve Sentman,  
Orange County Probation

Vice Chair - Chief Karen Fletcher,  
San Francisco – Adult County Probation

Chief Tracie Neal,  
Shasta County Probation

Chief Kelly Zuniga,  
Kings County Probation

Chief Tami DiSalvo,  
Alpine County Probation

Chief Christopher Hansen,  
Solano County Probation

## PRESIDENT'S AWARD

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### California Supreme Court Justice | Tani Cantil-Sakauye

This year the Chief Probation Officers of California bestow Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye of the California Supreme Court with the President's Award, a rare honor presented only under exceptional circumstances for a true visionary whose transformative impact on the justice system makes for a California that is safer, fairer and more equitable for all. Sworn into office on January 3, 2011, and presiding since then over the most significant changes to the justice system California has ever seen, Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye has led the judicial branch – indeed all branches of government – toward a system that is more accessible for all Californians, regardless of wealth or status. She has embraced innovation, pushed Courts to look to the future, and paved the way for a justice system that is markedly different than the one she entered into when she began her career as a deputy district attorney in 1984. She truly embodies our Association's spirit of "leading the change."

Early in her career, Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye established and presided over the first trial court in California devoted to domestic violence. She later led efforts to bring efficiency, fairness and transparency to courtrooms across the state. As a woman who faced discrimination herself early in her career, Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye never forgot her own roots as the product of grandparents, some of whom worked in the fields, and others who were interned during World War II. She has since worked tirelessly to fulfill the promise of equal justice under the law. We are confident that her vision of a justice system in which pretrial arrestees are judged for their actions, not their wealth, will eventually become law in California. We thank her for her leadership and vision.



## **AFFILIATE EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR**

*An employee or manager selected by each affiliate organization (through whatever selection process they choose) who represents the best employee, manager, and/or achievement in their field of service.*

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### **California Association of Probation Services Administrators (CAPSA) Kimberly Rankin | Kings County**

Kim has been an active member of CAPSA since her promotion to the managerial ranks in 2016, serving on both the Central Region Board and the State Executive Committee. Most recently, she served as State Executive Committee Secretary in 2019, and as the State Liaison in 2020. Kim also participated or chaired several subcommittees, including Interstate Compact for Juveniles, and has always been an integral part of the team that put together and carried out the annual CAPSA Conference. From formatting the conference program and creating the sponsor punch card, to assist with set-up and takedown, Kim has worked tirelessly each year to help make the conference a great experience for all CAPSA members.

Kim's experiences and contributions outside of CAPSA are noteworthy as well. Kim has worked in a variety of adult and juvenile assignments during her time with both Tulare and Kings County Probation Departments. She was promoted to supervisor and later to manager in Kings County, where among other things, she assisted in the implementation of AB 109/SB 678 on the adult side and Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) in the juvenile world. She currently manages adult court, day reporting center and pre-trial services.

The regional chair has routinely called on Kim for guidance and assistance whenever CAPSA related questions arose. Anyone who has had the pleasure of working with Kim is won over by her helpful and caring nature as well as her commitment to the probation profession and her peers around the state. We wholeheartedly endorse Kim for the CAPSA Central Region Employee of the Year and have selected her as the CPOC Affiliate Employee of the Year for 2020.

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## Probation Business Managers Association (PBMA) Laetesia Ible | Sacramento County

Laetesia joined PBMA in 2018 and jumped right in to serve as the Sacramento Regional Chair in 2019. While serving as Regional Chair, Laetesia expressed she was learning so much and contributing her new knowledge to her agency in Sacramento County, that she was willing to continue as Regional chair in 2020. Those who have served alongside Ms. Ible over the last two years will attest to her high energy and ability to keep her eye on meeting the goals of PBMA and CPOC to ensure each organization fulfills its respective mission.

Ms. Ible's professional leadership serves as a model for other PBMA members, especially when faced with a challenging task in challenging times. Her dedication to keeping communication flowing within PBMA has been a positive note during this hectic year. She has been called many times during this year with questions on county practices, procedures, revenue outlooks, and various legislative items. She responds professionally, promptly, and provides constructive suggestions.

This year, Ms. Ible has played a crucial role in keeping the members of PBMA connected in a year where separation was the rule. Ms. Ible volunteered to be the main point of contact for the three northernmost regions (Sacramento, North and Bay Area), arranging tele-video conferences, sharing information between the regions, and ensuring membership information was updated, while onboarding new members to ensure the regions could continue meeting in our new world of social distancing. Her dedication this year to managing the regional meetings, providing reminders on important dates and tasks, and ensuring timely updates on hot and/or strategic topics has been much appreciated by the PBMA Executive Committee and the membership during this pandemic. She set up the first large scale tele-video conference for all three northern regions in the first months of the pandemic, served as the moderator for the meeting, and provided feedback from that meeting to the PBMA Executive Committee in preparation for our first virtual statewide membership meeting. She continued to arrange and moderate regular regional meetings for the remainder of 2020. During these meetings, Ms. Ible provided examples and experience from her County on agenda items to pave the way for other members to participate and provided thoughtful guidance on questions from members with positive feedback.

Laetesia also volunteered to be considered for the PBMA Secretary/Treasurer position. In October, during PBMA's most recent Statewide membership meeting, Ms. Ible was voted into the role of Secretary/Treasurer for PBMA for calendar year 2021. She has been an asset leading PBMA in a year when leadership was crucial.

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## **Probation IT Managers Association (PITMA)** **Elainerose Wingo | San Diego County**

Elainerose Wingo is being nominated as Employee of the Year 2020 for PITMA. Although her current job keeps her very busy, she was excited to join PITMA. She started as the Urban Representative, then became Vice President, and is now the PITMA President. Regardless of her role, she is always willing to help anyone at any time. When Elainerose is involved, you know not only will the issue be taken care of, but it will be taken care of in a very professional manner. In the event of a last minute or stressful request, she is fast to get the job done. She enjoys technology and sharing her knowledge. Although Elainerose is pulled in many different directions, she is always up to date with technology and efficient in sending out communication to the PITMA group.

Elainerose stepped up to the plate, and truly demonstrated her commitment, adaptability, and dedication after the position became vacant, especially during this very chaotic, unprecedented time. She is a great example of a team player and has shown that she is a leader by keeping the PITMA Board active even though there are many vacancies.

## **California Association of Probation Institutions Administrators (CAPIA)** **Marty Mitchell | Sonoma County**

Marty has been a member of CAPIA since 2010 when he first became the Assistant Director of Sonoma County Juvenile Hall. Marty has been a member of CAPIA's Executive board for a number of years now, first holding the position of the Bay Region's Secretary and then going on to become the Bay Region's Chair for a number more.

Marty and his team also spoke at the 2018 CAPIA conference about Sonoma County's first evacuation experience in 2017 in response to a wildfire that was close to their facility. This difficult task served as a solid learning experience for all present. Marty's experiences, undoubtedly, helped a number of other administrators develop their own evacuation plans, a number of which have had to be used in the ensuing years, including Sonoma's once again this last year.

The executive board has nominated Marty not only because of his tireless devotion and work for CAPIA over the years, but because he has also been seen by all board members as an exemplary role model of what a Juvenile Institutions Administrator should be. Quick to volunteer and even quicker to complete tasks, Marty is not only a great guy to be around, with a positive attitude and always present smile, but simply put, he gets stuff done.

In fact, Marty might best be described from the words of Sonoma County Deputy Chief Vanessa Fuchs, when asked about Marty she replied, "Boom, Boom, Boom" is a sign that hangs in Marty's office. That was given to him by a former supervisor. It signifies how quickly

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Marty accomplishes tasks. His clean desk is another indication of how swiftly, yet thoroughly, Marty tackles job assignments. Juvenile Hall is an environment that is unpredictable, constantly evolving, and never closes, so having a leader that efficiently and effectively runs the division, is paramount.

I (Deputy Chief Fuchs) have had the privilege of working with Marty throughout his career, and briefly shared an office with him (his side much cleaner than mine). It is hard to imagine that Marty is only celebrating his 15th year with the Sonoma County Probation Department. “Boom, Boom, Boom” could also describe his quick advancement within the agency. Marty came to the department having already been a director of a previous Juvenile Hall. The experience he brought with him, coupled with his leadership skills, deep respect and admiration for the Juvenile Corrections Field and his desire to make a difference in the lives of young people, had him quickly moving through the JCC Ranks, into an Assistant Director position, and finally into the Director of Sonoma County Juvenile Hall position in November of 2013.





## TIM FITZHARRIS AWARD

*Recognition award given to a non-probation employee who has made a very significant contribution to the field of corrections.*

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### **Kelly Jermaine Turner | Founder of Symple Equazion**

Author and Life Coach Kelly Jermaine Turner is a former "resident" of Central California Women's Facility (CCWF) in Chowchilla, California, where she served 13 years of a 25 years-to-life California Three Strikes sentence for forging a \$146.16 check to a department store. The normal maximum sentence for her crime was three years. However, because it was Ms. Turner's third strike for a nonviolent offense, she was required to serve a minimum of 25 years before she was eligible for parole consideration, however on September 8, 2009, after a three-year appeal effort by her pro-bono legal team, a Los Angeles Superior Court judge ruled that Ms. Turner had been "oversentenced." The judge re-sentenced her to seven years, declared that her time had been served, and ordered her immediate release without parole restrictions.

Shortly after her release Ms. Turner authored two books, *The Art of Frowns to Smiles* and *The P.O.W.E.R Process (Positive Objects & Words Equals Results)*. Ms. Turner wrote both books while simultaneously forming her 501(c)(3) Symple Equazion, Inc. Symple Equazion facilitates cognitive behavioral therapy groups using the books authored by Ms. Turner. Both books consist of the steps Ms. Turner took to transform her life. These documented steps allow her to reach youth on court supervised release in a unique manner. In addition to facilitating groups for disadvantaged and hurt youth Ms. Turner also facilitates groups within Merced County School District. In addition Ms. Turner provides opportunities for youth to complete community service hours or receive youth leadership training throughout California.

Ms. Turner believes in partnerships and for that reason in 2015 Merced City Council selected Ms. Turner as the recipient of McNamara Community Youth Center a drop in center for youth B-18 years of age Monday through Friday 3-6 p.m. Youth can go there for homework assistance, positive character building skills, art and crafts.

Ms. Turner's most recent accomplishment is opening Aim High Transitional Home for young ladies 18 to 24 years of age currently homeless or at risk of homelessness in hope of expanding her efforts to create a healthy community.





## JUDICIAL OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARD

*Recognition award given to a judicial officer who has contributed or provided leadership in corrections.*

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### **Honorable Kenneth J. Gness | Sonoma County**

The Sonoma County Probation Department requests CPOC consideration in the selection of the Honorable Kenneth (Ken) Gness as Judicial Officer of the Year. The awards committee may recall our Department previously nominated Judge Gness in 2018. Thankfully, Judge Gness has continued in his capacity as the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court. It is appropriate, for all the reasons noted in the 2018 nomination – notably recognition of his demonstrated commitment to collaboration, steady leadership in the midst of chaos and the positive impact his thoughtful application of law has on the lives of youth and families in our community – he is again being nominated for this award.

Since 2017, Sonoma County has been plagued by multiple disasters. In January of 2017, flooding led to the evacuation of our Probation Camp. Later that year, an historic wildfire led to the evacuation of our Juvenile Justice Center and closure of local Courts for many weeks. These unprecedented wildfires were devastating to our community, and frankly, we were ill prepared for the tragic impacts. In 2018, devastating floods led to yet another evacuation of our Probation Camp. During 2019, we dealt with multiple Public Safety Power Shutoffs, as many Counties did, though these events specifically affected operations at our Juvenile Justice Center necessitating creative approaches for holding in-person Court sessions. Later in 2019, our community experienced additional wildfires causing the evacuation of nearly half the residents in our County.

Now, in 2020, every county in California is dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as civil unrest. Sonoma County, however, also had to deal with two separate - yet equally - devastating wildfires. The first in August led to evacuation of our Probation Camp. Another fire the following month forced evacuation of the Juvenile Justice Center. As of this submission, the Juvenile Justice Center remains evacuated, affecting the Court, Juvenile Hall, justice partners, and youth/families.

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Throughout the chaos and devastation, Judge Gness has remained steadfast in his commitment to ensuring the rights of youth and families, as well as those of victims, are preserved. He is a capable problem solver who willingly collaborated with Probation, bringing his experience and leadership to bear in formulating solutions to the many challenges brought about by closure of the Juvenile Justice Center, such that the youth and families who are experiencing great turmoil in their lives are still served in a thoughtful and timely manner. With each disaster, he has proven himself adaptable to unprecedented circumstances, capably performing his judicial duties. Even when our youth are spread across multiple counties due to evacuations, Judge Gness vigorously ensures each youth is tracked and gets his/her day in Court, even if it is virtual. One of the most notable characteristics of Judge Gness' judicial behavior is the humanizing connection he makes with youth who appear in his Court, and the genuine interest he takes in each youth's journey along the path of rehabilitation.

Twenty-nineteen and 2020 not only saw us going through the challenges of multiple disasters, but in the midst of these we were also going through a review of the entire Juvenile Justice system conducted by The Council of State Governments Justice Center. Despite everything we experienced locally, Judge Gness did not hesitate to agree to participate on the "Improving Outcomes for Youth" Initiative Task Force. Not surprisingly, he played an active role on the Task Force, participating in multiple focus groups as well as quarterly meetings, offering perspective, reviewing findings and engaging in challenging conversations around system improvements. This system review culminated in a report containing recommendations for improvement. Judge Gness willingly volunteered to meet with the County Administrator and Board Chair to present report results and advocate for their support in moving forward with the recommendations. He even requested a visiting Judge cover his Court calendar in order to attend the early morning meeting.

Frankly, there is no way to express in "one page (no more than two pages)", how incredibly fortunate we are to work with such a collaborative, hardworking, intelligent and compassionate jurist. Simply stated, Judge Gness is a wonderful human being whose inspired leadership encourages all of us who toil in the juvenile justice system to do our best for the youth, families and community members we collectively serve.




## TRAINER OF THE YEAR

*Recognition award granted to a California county probation instructor whose contributions are instrumental in the delivery of successful training to the probation industry.*

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### Tom Milder | San Luis Obispo County

Thomas Milder is Chief Deputy Probation Officer of the Juvenile Services Division at the San Luis Obispo County Probation Department. He has a remarkable breadth of knowledge in the juvenile probation field and has instructed two Juvenile Probation Placement Core webinars for Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC) in 2020. In these trainings, he demonstrated a high-level of professionalism and dedication towards the participants' learning experience. Thomas also received rave reviews from the trainees. He clearly displayed mastery in placement as he effectively responded to questions and guided attendees through the complexities of the placement process. Additionally, he was able to break down heavy content information into manageable and easy to understand fragments. Furthermore, he has assisted CPOC on multiple occasions with juvenile probation related matters that have been very valuable in the trainings delivered to the probation industry. Thomas Milder's great strength as a trainer and impeccable work ethic makes him a great candidate for the CPOC Trainer of the Year award.





## CPOC AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

*Recognition award given to a probation employee who has made significant contributions that have had a statewide or far-reaching impact on probation.*

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### Juan Damian | Riverside County

Juan Damian has spent the last 20 years of his career shaping the lives of the young people in our community as a stellar Probation Correctional Officer at Indio Juvenile Hall. Since day one, Mr. Damian has demonstrated unwavering levels of dedication and commitment to both the Riverside County Probation Department and the youth he has sworn to serve. To that end, he embodies the essence of the California Probation Officers Award of Excellence as he has made significant contributions to the youth in his care. Currently, the juvenile justice system is undergoing a historic transformation. Mr. Damian has been at the forefront of this change and is resolute on creating a culture that is focused on positive youth development.

In addition to Mr. Damian's primary assignment, he has willingly, without hesitation, to take on the graduate program at Indio Juvenile Hall. He immediately assessed the needs and interests of our youth and began interfacing with representatives from Riverside Community College and College of the Desert to design a program tailored to them. Currently, 10 youth have committed to a 7-week program where they will receive an introduction to college, develop soft skills, and focus on career development. In the partnership with College of the Desert, Mr. Damian is evaluating the hospitality industry and assessing educational pathways that can position our youth for success, to include certification in AC repair. Mr. Damian's vision for the program is limitless. He is also coordinating to have ICEV access available for those youth who are interested in various certificate programs to gain entry level employment upon release. Spearheading this program in and of itself is something to be proud; however, what truly stands out is the heart and compassion that Mr. Damian puts forth as he works with the youth. At the end of the day, it is the forged relationships and not always the program that change a life. Through a safe, supportive, and nurturing learning environment, Juan has allowed these youth to see beyond today. Their conversations around the living unit have been elevated as they speak about their future and contributions to society. The youth now have something they look forward to, one student stated, "The graduate program has helped me realize all the mistakes I've done should not stop me from chasing my true dreams. I am grateful for the opportunity to continue my education. Thank you, RCP." Post-Secondary education is a critical resource for our youth as they look to a new structure that supports them as they assess new opportunities for a meaningful future.



## REGIONAL EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

*An employee of any rank selected by the CPOC Region for meritorious service, significant contributions, career achievement, or other reason of the region's choice.*

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### BAY REGION

#### **Steve Adami | San Francisco County – Adult Probation**

Steve knows first-hand the critical importance of effective and evidence-based reentry services. After spending over 20 years addicted to drugs and in and out of jails and prison, Steve received an incredible gift - he got clean and sober. After being released from prison in 2010, he earned a Master's Degree in Public Administration, was inducted into a National Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration and received the Barbara Jordan Award for Academic Excellence from San Francisco State University. In 2014 he was hired by the San Francisco Adult Probation Department, promoted to a managerial position, and assumed the Interim Director position in February 2020.

Throughout his employment, Steve has advocated for client services and has been a driving force in building collaborative partnerships with our criminal justice colleagues and our community stakeholders. As a balanced voice for both rehabilitation and accountability, Steve has earned the respect of the community, elected officials and has gained the trust of our sworn probation staff through his willingness to roll up his sleeves and provide the support necessary to produce positive outcomes.

Over the past year, Steve has been instrumental in digitizing our Getting Out & Staying Out Resource Guide in order to provide access to inmates at every State Prison facility in California, crafting and securing numerous contracts for critical services provided by community based organizations, implementing a Wall of Change Program, launching a Community Advisory Board of former offenders to provide input on community needs and services and providing leadership in the oversight of the San Francisco Reentry Council, all while managing staff and having direct oversight of the Department's Community Assessment and Services Center (CASC), a one-stop reentry services center. In addition, Steve has created and managed our expansive housing portfolio of over 300 transitional housing opportunities throughout the City of San Francisco, which during FY 2019/20 reduced homelessness in San Francisco by 48,825 days.

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As Steve assumed the role of Interim Director, the pandemic became a health crisis that drastically changed our operations and services to clients. Being a creative leader and problem solver, Steve very quickly began planning how to provide services remotely. In addition to converting the programming traditionally provided at the CASC to Zoom, Steve was the catalyst in obtaining a significant donation of tablets for clients in our housing programs and ensuring that Wi-Fi was available in these locations. In addition, during the pandemic Steve has led the Department in launching two new housing programs in a hotel in Union Square and through a three-year rental subsidy program. These new programs have benefitted both Probation clients and those released from custody pretrial - a phenomenal accomplishment at any time, but even more so during COVID-19 when more compromised justice-involved individuals were potentially being exposed to and spreading the virus.

Steve is the consummate professional who leads his Division with passion and commitment for our work. He deeply cares about people and how they manage and thrive in what is often a very challenging environment in San Francisco for those who are vulnerable. In addition to his day-to-day duties, Steve recruits Probation staff to join him in giving back to the community through volunteering. Delivering food to the elderly is a project he has taken on, which demonstrates his spirit and his belief that community service feeds the soul.

## SACRAMENTO REGION

### Geri Payne | El Dorado County

Geri Payne has worked for the El Dorado County Probation Department for almost 8 years, mostly in an administrative, clerical function. In 2019, the Department created the Probation Assistant (PA) assignment, an entry-level non-sworn position. In July of 2020, Geri completed her first year as a PA. As the only PA in juvenile field services, her assignment primarily assists our foster care operations. This means that Geri had to learn the world of “placement,” a very complicated, child welfare-based, sworn officer assignment often taking years to understand and effectively manage. Geri requests to attend every available training to expand her knowledge in foster care and juvenile operations, often alongside sworn officers, in order to assist her peers and the youth in their care. She has attended placement officer CORE and many other foster care related offerings through CPOC, Motivational Interviewing, Moral Reconciliation Therapy, etc. because she wants to be the best she can and assist others efficiently and effectively.

Geri conducts all of our Department’s Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings for foster youth, a monumental task of learning, coordinating, leading, and improving. She completes all our family finding efforts for youth and families. She leads our Resource Family Approval (RFA) Team and has created and finalized a Mission, Vision and Values statement for our RFA process, created a logo that has been used for shirts, business cards, and recruiting materials, implemented a dedicated phone line and email box for easier and quicker communication for prospective RFA applicants, coordinated the rental of a RFA booth at the county fair, and created a probation power point presentation for the mandatory RFA training

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that all applicants need, working with the training coordinator at the local community college. She is the liaison to the RFA unit in our county's Child Welfare division, and to the local community-based organization with whom we contract to conduct the Family Evaluation portion of the RFA process, creating working relationships we did not previously have.

In addition to her foster care related work, Geri is an Arbinger Institute trainer. Earlier this year, one of Geri's peer trainers stated: "I just wanted to share with you my experience with facilitating the Arbinger workshop with Geri this weekend. Geri is such an impressive woman. She was prepared and her knowledge and passion for the subject really stood out. She truly cares about our people and her compassion is very evident in how she communicates. She is open and available with others which lets them know they have a safe place to talk about difficult issues. The Arbinger material can really bring up those issues and having Geri there to inspire the openness in the participants was really key to some of their processing of this material. She made sure that she took the time needed, be it at lunch or on breaks, after class, or during if necessary, to help with that process. She is quick to offer encouragement and guidance. At the same time, she was able to separate her role as Peer Support and inform participants that it is available anytime they need it. She is a huge asset to our team."

As indicated above, Geri is a member of our Department's Peer Support Team. Earlier this year, without being asked, she took the lead as the Peer Support Team Coordinator. Geri conducted "interviews" and selected new members, led meetings, is working toward creating forms/processes, and communicates Department-wide on Peer Support matters. Geri did all of this without being asked; she saw a need and addressed a need. Her proactive assistance to her peers - sworn and non-sworn - is amazingly selfless and noble, and they see her as a valuable asset and rely on her areas of expertise.

It is hoped you are reading this and thinking, "Wow! That is a lot of responsibility, passion, assistance, proactive creativity, and independence for an entry level assignment!" Geri has taken her assignment - the first of its kind - and ran with it, learning all she can, fixing previously unaddressed issues, creating processes, communicating changes, improving relationships, assisting her peers - all without much supervisory oversight or direction. I should know; she reports directly to me.

Geri's work has allowed officers to spend more time addressing needs of youth and families, instead of completing administrative tasks and "re-inventing the wheel" each time a unique situation occurs; this occurred prior to Geri's PA assignment, as our Department has not had resources to efficiently address the Continuum of Care reform efforts and memorialize related policies and procedures.

Geri Payne is single-handedly making foster care and juvenile operations in El Dorado County much more effective, efficient, safe, home-like, youth-centered, and family focused. Her positive impact has been amazing. With great enthusiasm, she is nominated for the Sacramento Region Employee of the Year award.

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## SOUTH REGION

### Melinda Cross | Ventura County

Melinda is deserving of this award for her impact within the Probation Agency through the COVID-19 pandemic and her strong and unwavering advocacy for youth we serve in Ventura County.

Melinda oversees the Probation Agency's Juvenile Court Services Division, which includes Juvenile Investigations, Placement Unit, and Juvenile Intake/Community Confinement. Her advocacy for youth we serve crosses through all areas of the justice system and service disciplines. As she often says, "I will not allow our system to criminalize mental health." To this point, she often challenges criminal filings, pre- and post-adjudicated custody commitments, and inadequate community services for our youth suffering from mental health issues and their families who need ongoing support. Melinda is often advocating more than our Behavioral Health and Human Services partners, which typically result in more individualized and comprehensive service case plans and follow through accountability. Although she impacts many case outcomes, one recent case in particular is when she had worked tirelessly with the Public Defender's Office and against the tides of behavioral health and child welfare professionals to facilitate the placement release of a 16-year old youth living with autism (5-year old functionality) and a severe history of mental and physical abuse, whose crime was a direct result of his mental health illness.

Her leadership and youth advocacy have led to the Agency-wide expansion of Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings being applied throughout the Juvenile Services Bureau. In addition, she has led the Probation Agency's CCR transition and implementation, for which she has done a fabulous job; so much so, that she was asked to be a panelist for CPOC's virtual CCR Conference. Furthermore, Melinda has done amazing work with our Placement Unit team and the field services division resulting in about 75% less youth requiring congregate care.

The pandemic in relation to the impacts on the Probation Agency's Juvenile Services Bureau required quick, decisive, and effective leadership to set safety measures in place, reorganize divisions to provide essential and mandated services, and implementing infection mitigation efforts within the Juvenile Facilities (JF). As a result of the pandemic, programming providers ceased delivering services, leaving the Probation Agency in jeopardy of non-compliance with Title 15 programming regulations. Recognizing this, and against the will of some staff members, she immediately volunteered to redeploy some of her personnel to the JF to bridge these services. Melinda also quickly recognized the need to help support the JF at the manager level and volunteered to assist with implementing mitigation efforts within the JF. This voluntary increase in responsibility required her to be in the office daily instead of telecommuting. Taking this a step further, she volunteered to work weekends and share the JF manager shifts so that the JF always had a manager on site for staff and leadership support and direction as we traveled through uncharted territory.

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## NORTH REGION

### Helen Cetnar | Del Norte County

Helen Cetnar has worked for the Del Norte County Probation Department since September 11, 2006. She has risen through the ranks to become a Senior Legal Clerk and an integral part of our department, the sole supervisor managing all aspects of our day to day office operations. Time and time again people within and outside our department make a point to let us know what an outstanding job she does for the department. Her determination and drive have continually contributed to the overall success of the department and its mission. When the Probation Department was assigned the task of monitoring all Community Work Service for Del Norte County in 2008 the task fell to Helen. She stepped up to implement procedures, create expectation of clients and worksites, and generally created a smooth-running program out of chaos.

Helen has assisted with the numerous challenges 2011 Realignment brought, including collaborating with the Court clerks and DA's office to determine appropriate workflows, creating forms, helping ensure our data is current in the SRF, and working to capture necessary data for state mandated reports.

She has made an impact in all of the Department divisions with her skills and contributions as our point person with our case management system. Without her resolve to develop the solutions we needed to successfully move forward with the implementation of our case management system, both during its initial rollout in 2013 up to the present day, it would have surely failed. Her dedication to making our CMS work for us continues to greatly improve our ability to serve our community.

In 2019, she acted as our point person to plan for a painting and flooring project that was long overdue. Awkwardly, the planned implementation of this project happened right in the middle of an inconvenient pandemic. Helen took it in stride and made sure that the project went off without a hitch, acting as a job fore(wo)man, painter, and coordinator, all while managing to wend her way through the complications of court closures, sanitizing, and making sure we all stayed sane.

The past 15 years would have been insurmountably more difficult without her. Our staff consistently joke that instead of finding your answers at Google.com you go to Helen.com. She has kept the department functioning at a high-level during times of low staffing in Support Services, and even at times made sure things continued to operate single-handedly.

Though all of these accomplishments have not occurred in a single year, her dedication and drive make her an invaluable employee of Del Norte County Probation who deserves to be recognized.

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## CENTRAL REGION

### Antonio Prado | Stanislaus County

Antonio Prado is a Supervising Probation Corrections Officer (SPCO) at Stanislaus County Juvenile Hall who has worked with our department for the past twelve years. SPCO Prado is respected as a knowledgeable, fair, capable, and compassionate employee with an incredible work ethic. While it is common for many Juvenile Hall employees to have such characteristics, SPCO Prado uses these traits to benefit so many others, and it is this that sets him apart. For example, while assigned to the Alternatives to Custody Unit, SPCO Prado took the opportunity of being in a “field” assignment to build bridges between our department and members of our community. In addition to participating in numerous community events, there were several occasions where out of his own pocket, SPCO Prado purchased items for those in need, especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic. On one memorable occasion, SPCO Prado and his partner purchased new shoes and toys for two children who became admirers of the “probation guys” who routinely visited their housing complex to conduct their daily check-ins. Every day, when these two children would see SPCO Prado and his partner pull in, the young children would run out, barefoot, to say hello with enthusiasm and a smile. SPCO Prado and his partner took it upon themselves to purchase new shoes and toys, unique to each child, after realizing these two children didn’t have shoes. Later during the pandemic, when obtaining toilet paper became such an issue for so many families, SPCO Prado and his partner filled their probation vehicle with a supply of it. SPCO Prado and his partner provided toilet paper rolls to families of the youth they came to visit if they learned families were in need. To say our probation families appreciate this is an understatement. SPCO Prado also assisted in handing out lunches, working in coordination with a local school district, to help with the manpower the school desperately needed during the pandemic. It is this kind of partnership that puts our department, and our profession in the best light possible.

In addition to assisting community members, SPCO Prado has greatly assisted not just his own colleagues, but colleagues throughout the state. Last year, SPCO Prado was one of several staff who travelled to San Joaquin County to cover their institutions while their department held a ceremony to mourn the loss of one of their officers. SPCO Prado has also assisted numerous probation departments throughout the state who have reached out needing help and guidance with scheduling software. Because SPCO Prado helped implement scheduling software in our institutions, he quickly became an expert in the utilization of the software. When consulted, he has provided overviews and presentations on the software, while walking partner agencies through the system. He has helped explain how utilizing such a system can assist with efficiency and manpower in coordinating juvenile facilities’ schedules. His efforts have been praised by Chiefs and Management from the agencies in our state he has taken the time to assist.

SPCO Prado does not pass on opportunities to assist within his department as well. Over the past year, SPCO Prado has pruned and weeded out the Juvenile Commitment Facility garden and shoveled large mounds of bark which needed to be spread out in the facility yard. Both

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projects required a great deal of time and hard labor. During these two instances, SPCO Prado used the work as an opportunity for youth to earn incentives and rewards while they too, helped with these tall tasks. He was able to connect with the youth assisting him, and in turn, gained their respect for doing the work right alongside them.

As previously mentioned, SPCO Prado is also knowledgeable and extremely forward-thinking. At the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic, SPCO Prado asked permission to order more Electronic Monitoring Program (EMP) Units in the event our facilities would need to reduce our population to keep both youth and staff safe. The order was approved, and SPCO Prado's insightfulness was spot-on. Just a few days after requesting the additional units, our Juvenile Court authorized the release of over 20 youth. Thanks to SPCO Prado's recommendation, our department had enough EMP units on hand to facilitate all of the releases authorized by the Court. EMP units quickly became a very hot commodity all over the nation, so SPCO Prado really set our department up in the best way possible to have the tools we needed.

It is noteworthy that at the beginning of the pandemic, there were so many "unknowns", including how officers would conduct fieldwork. Knowing that many youths were likely to be released on Alternatives to Custody Programs, SPCO Prado created a "COVID-19 Field Guide" to assist officers in being as safe as possible with all of the many unknown challenges the pandemic presented to staff. This guide was not just utilized by institutions staff, rather, it was a helpful tool to our field services division when they, too, resumed fieldwork.

As many at CPOC know, working the daily grind of an institution can be monotonous and far from glamorous. With this said, SPCO Prado does not skip out on opportunities to help his colleagues to prevent mandating staff from having to stay and work additional hours. More times than I can count, SPCO Prado has stepped down from his role in the Alternatives to Custody Unit to assist in covering open shifts in our institutions. It is this kind of compassion, fortitude, and work ethic that is deserving of praise and recognition.

Thank you, SPCO Prado for building bridges in our community, with our partners, with our youth, and with your peers. You epitomize what the role of a Probation Corrections Officer should look like and you are appreciated so much.

# CPOC EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

*To Be Announced*

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## **DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CERTIFICATES**

*Distinguished Service Certificates are provided to Chiefs to present to all nominees for their meritorious service.*

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- *Kathleen Azevedo, Supervising Deputy Probation Officer, Solano County*
- *Shawn Barry, Supervising Probation Officer, Orange County*
- *Jenifer Brown, Division Director, Alameda County*
- *Angelina Coffey, Administrative Services Officer, Nevada County*
- *Spencer Cross, Probation Manager, Santa Barbara County*
- *Gilbert C. Davila, Jr., Probation Director, Los Angeles County*
- *Brian Dolcini, Administrative Probation Officer, El Dorado County*
- *Alastair Flores, Deputy Probation Officer II, Mono County*
- *James Goodwine, Supervising Probation Officer, Shasta County*
- *Jennifer Hard, Program Manager, Butte County*
- *Christy Henzi, Division Director, Alameda County*
- *Sandra Hernandez, Teacher – Larry F. Smith School, Riverside County*
- *David Mallory, Supervising Probation Officer, Butte County*
- *Orepa Mamea, Program Analyst, Tehama County*
- *Andrew Martinez, Group Supervisor, Santa Cruz County*

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- *Marian Martino, Juvenile Institutions Volunteer, Stanislaus County*
- *Angelica Matus-Mora, Deputy Probation Officer II, Imperial County*
- *Jonathan McIsaac, Probation Director, Los Angeles County*
- *Jeff Mills, Financial Administrative Services Officer, Mono County*
- *Kary Oberlies, Division Director, San Bernardino County*
- *Gary Romanko, Deputy Chief Probation Officer, El Dorado County*
- *Lisa Sawin, Deputy Chief, San Diego County*
- *Chris Van Orden, Deputy Probation Officer, Napa County*
- *Ivy White, Supervising Probation Officer, Orange County*
- *Lori Wilson, Division Director, Riverside County*



# OUR MISSION

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## Leading the Change

We, the Chief Probation Officers of California, are an association of all 58 counties with a shared identity as law enforcement leaders. We are committed to a research-based approach to public safety that promotes positive behavior change. Our leadership guides policy and practice in the areas of prevention, community-based corrections, secure detention for youth, and direct human services. Our goal is to prevent crime and delinquency, reduce recidivism, restore victims, and promote healthy families and communities. We proudly serve our Counties and Courts that supports them as they assess new opportunities for a meaning future. Mr. Damian's contributions to the department and the youth of Riverside County have been invaluable.

**Chief Probation Officers of California**

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