

Thankz for Exzellece



Councilman Dennis Zine hosts 10th annual Z Awards for public service excellence.

The 10th annual Z Awards for ExZellece luncheon was held May 24 at the Warner Center Marriott in Woodland Hills to honor public safety personnel who go above and beyond what is expected of them to serve the citizens of the Third Council District and the greater Los Angeles community. ABC7 anchor David Ono presented the awards, and the Hon. Richard Katz served as the host.

The Z Awards for ExZellece, founded by Councilman Dennis P. Zine, recognizes individuals for their ongoing dedication, commitment, and "exzellece" in their respective fields and for their outstanding contributions in the areas of law enforcement, public safe-

ty, and community advocacy. At this year's Z Awards ceremony, Council District Three honored personnel from the LAPD, the LAFD, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the California Highway Patrol, and the Los Angeles County Department of Probation. And for the first time in Z Awards history, a CitiZen Award was presented to Dennis McCarthy, an iconic individual who has made an enduring impression on the San Fernando Valley through his celebration of unsung heroes in his columns featured in the *Los Angeles Daily News* and his recently released book, *Here's to the Winners*.

Alive! congratulates all the winners.



The awardees gather together at the 10th annual Z Awards for ExZellece May 24.



Det. Stephanie Krajchir and Investigator Rhiannon Talley-Sills
LAPD Valley Traffic Division

Valley Traffic Division's Det. Stephanie Krajchir and Investigator Rhiannon Talley-Sills received the Z Award for ExZellece not only for their stellar careers in law enforcement, but also for their work on a specific incident that occurred April 20, 2011. This highly publicized case involved the hit-and-run of two high school seniors who were riding their bicycles and claimed the life of one of

the teenagers immediately. There was minimal physical evidence left at the scene and few leads. Without the standout work of Det. Stephanie Krajchir and Investigator Rhiannon Talley-Sills, this horrific crime may have gone unsolved. After four months of multi-agency cooperation and tenacious detective work by Krajchir and Talley-Sills, the case was solved. Recently, both suspects pled guilty for vehicular manslaughter and conspiracy and received prison time.



Lt. Jill Niles
LAPD West Valley Area

Lt. Jill Niles, a 30-year veteran of the LAPD, is and has always been a trailblazer. Despite the many challenges and obstacles she faced in a traditionally male-dominated profession, her resolve and determination to succeed was never shaken. Through her hard work, fortitude, and proactive field enforcement, she was able to work her way through a variety of divisions and assignments from

South Los Angeles to the San Fernando Valley. She was eventually selected to the Department's elite Metropolitan Division, which runs six platoons of specially trained police officers and also operates the LAPD's prestigious SWAT unit. It was here where she worked as a Platoon Sergeant, once again shattering stereotypes and proving herself an exceptional member of this Department. Lieutenant Niles has spent the better part of the last 12 years working as a Lieutenant Watch Commander at West Valley Area, where she has been the recipient of many accolades and commendations.



Capt. Alfred Hernandez
LAFD

Following in his father's footsteps, a retired Assistant Chief, Capt. Alfred Hernandez has been an outstanding member of the LAFD for 17 years, holding the rank of Captain for seven of those years. Among his many challenging details were the Downtown Los Angeles, MacArthur Park, Rampart, Harbor City, and San Fernando

Valley areas. Capt. Hernandez is also a state certified paramedic and was assigned as a Paramedic Captain in downtown Los Angeles. During his last two years at Fire Station 84 in the West Valley, Capt. Hernandez's crew has been characterized by their responsiveness, integrity, and professionalism. Beyond the thousands of emergency incidents embodying Capt. Hernandez's career, perhaps the pinnacle was when he was shown on CNN and *The Today Show* being lowered into an overflowing Los Angeles River during a raging winter storm to rescue a seven-year-old child. As Capt. Hernandez proudly says, "It has always been a calling, not just a job."



Supervising Dep. Probation Officer Mary Ann Smiley
Los Angeles County Department of Probation

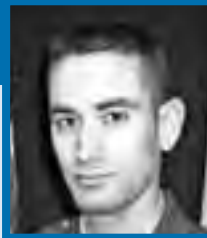
Supervising Dep. Probation Officer Mary Ann Smiley began her career with the Probation Department in 1998 as an Investigator Aide and worked in the Probation Department's Pre-Trial Services Division. Seeking to expand her Probation experience, SDPO Smiley transferred as a Deputy Probation Officer II to Camp Mendenhall, a

locked facility and one of several respected probation camps throughout the Los Angeles area. During these two years, she continued to excel in her functions as a DPO II as evidenced by her evaluations that included the words: commitment, passion, dependability, and reliability. SDPO Smiley later transferred to the Probation Department's Quality Assurance Bureau and, after four standout years in that assignment, SDPO Smiley transferred to the Juvenile Bureau and worked at Pacoima Middle School in Cluster 3 for a year. SDPO Smiley was eventually promoted to her current position of Supervising Dep. Probation Officer (SDPO) and helped organize several outstanding events including the Resource Expo, the Annual Children's Day Festival, and the Winnetka March for Kids. Recently, SDPO Smiley moved to the Adult Field Services Bureau and is assigned to the East San Fernando Valley Office in Van Nuys.



Dep. Santiago Robles
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Dep. Santiago Robles has served with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department for 13 years and has been assigned to the Transit Services Bureau for six of those years at the Chatsworth Sub Station. He was patrol-trained at Compton Station in South Los Angeles. Last year, Dep. Robles was recognized for a variety of accomplishments, including his efficiency and strong work ethic by making more than 251 arrests and writing more than 913 citations, primarily in the West Valley and Council District Three. When disaggregated, 367 of those citations were vehicle code violations, 506 were fare enforcement violations, and 46 were parking citations. Prior to joining the Sheriff's Department, he served in the Marine Corps for six years.



Officer Richard Cominos
California Highway Patrol

California Highway Patrol Officer Richard Cominos entered the CHP Academy in 2007 and has spent his whole career in the West Valley. Like any dedicated teammate, he has taken on any and all duties and consistently received praise from his supervisors for his commitment to traffic safety. While assigned to the graveyard shift, Officer Cominos' outstanding efforts to remove impaired drivers from the highways are reflected in his receiving the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Award three consecutive years. Every year, MADD and the California Office of Traffic Safety honor law enforcement officers county-wide for their work to take DUI drivers off the road. Currently a Field Training Officer and Drug Recognition Expert, Officer Cominos has logged well more than 250 arrests for impaired drivers in the Valley. Officer Cominos has also received training in street racing enforcement and auto theft and drug interdiction training.



Columnist Dennis McCarthy
CitiZen Award

As one of the region's most beloved and highly regarded journalists, Dennis McCarthy has been sharing stories about San Fernando Valley residents and their extraordinary accomplishments in his *Los Angeles Daily News* column for decades. Throughout his career, he has won numerous awards for journalistic excellence from the industry's top trade organizations, including two statewide honors for best columnist from the California Newspaper Publisher's Association. McCarthy retired from the *Daily News* in January, but not before publishing his first book, *Here's to the Winners*, a handpicked collection of his favorite columns from the past 25 years.



Topanga Organized Retail Crimes Unit
LAPD Topanga Area

Created in January 2011, the Topanga Organized Retail Crimes (TORC) Unit, consisting of eight officers and a supervisor, was established to deal specifically with the high volume of crimes reported by private retailers in and around the malls that abound in the West San Fernando Valley. Since its inception, this unit has consistently exceeded the standard and has been at the forefront of many innovative programs involving retail crime. They have been working on a pilot project called "Catch and Demand," which turns first-time offenders into responsible paying customers through the civil demand process, leaving law enforcement out of the equation. Through several of the TORC Unit's cutting-edge efforts, a number of high profile retail crime rings have been broken, resulting in many arrests and convictions. The TORC Team members include: Sgt. Robert Schlesinger, Officer III Duke Dao, Officer III Marc Ferris, Officer II Matt Wortman, Officer II Bob Wronkowski, Officer II Steve Ohlrich, Officer II David Lin, Officer II Esteban Martinez, and Officer II Todd Baldwin.