



NEWS RELEASE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA • COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
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Stories of Hope and Redemption Highlight 2014 Passport to Life Expo

The 6th Annual *Passport to Life Career and Education Expo* will show hundreds of young people, whose offenses placed them in the juvenile justice system, how they can effect positive changes in their lives. The Expo will provide probationary youth with messages of hope and the ideas, tools, encouragement, career resources and tools to help them transition into productive adults.

Passport to Life is open to youth, 14 to 24 years of age, who are currently on probation or have a probation history. The event focuses on the importance of finishing high school, the value of obtaining higher education, and of building work-readiness skills. The event will be held on **Friday, August 8, 2014 at the San Diego City College campus (1313 Park Boulevard) from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

This year's keynote speakers are two former youth offenders who turned their lives around: Anakaren Ruano and Eliseo Nunez. Ruano spent her teen years addicted to drugs and moving in and out of the juvenile justice system. After completing rehab, she finished high school and is now a successful college student. Nunez, a former gang member, moved from juvenile court to the state and federal prison system. By the age of 25, Nunez distanced himself from the negative influences and behaviors of his youth and went back to school, where he graduated with honors. He recently received a national award for his work in the Urban Corps. Both speakers want young people to know that change is possible.

One of the featured workshops will include renowned Chicano artist Fabian Debora. Debora, a former East Los Angeles gang member and drug addict, turned his life around and has been showcased in solo and group art exhibitions throughout the United States.

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“This is the only program of its kind. We are expecting up to 900 young people to attend. Many of these youth offenders have never been told they can accomplish great things or that they can go to college. We intentionally hold this event on the San Diego City College campus so these kids can begin to feel that higher education is within their reach”, says San Diego Superior Court Judge Carolyn M. Caietti.

Judge Caietti has collaborated with Chief Probation Officer Mack Jenkins to work on this worthwhile project along with numerous public and private organizations.

Chief Probation Officer Mack Jenkins says, “We are excited to once again, in collaboration with the Juvenile Court and Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Carolyn Caietti, be hosting the ‘Passport to Life’. Passport to Life fully embraces the mission and goals of the Juvenile Court system. Through it, we hope to inspire young people in the system and expose them to opportunities to further their education that they may never have known existed. It is a great event and something we look forward to each year.”

The program kicks off with an inspiring talk from Anakaren Ruano and Eliseo Nunez. Multiple breakout workshops will follow with topics such as:

- *Don't Allow Your Past to Punish Your Future*
- *Landing and Keeping a Job*
- *Pathways to Completing High School*
- *Education Beyond High School*
- *Being Responsible On-Line*

There will also be a lunchtime “Dress for Success” fashion show, which features the proper attire for job interviews and employment.

Approximately 80 organizations representing schools, branches of the military, careers, training services, and other resources will staff informational tables and provide opportunities for one-on-one interaction.

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Passport to Life is a collaborative effort of the following organizations:

- San Diego Superior Court
- San Diego County Probation Department
- San Diego City College
- San Diego Workforce Partnership
- San Diego County Office of Education; Juvenile Court and Community Schools
- San Diego County District Attorney's Office
- San Diego County Public Defender's Office

Note: Up to 800 young people between the ages of 14 and 24 are expected to attend. Some individuals and their parents have signed media waivers agreeing to on-camera and print interviews.

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