



NEWS RELEASE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA • COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
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*San Diego's "At Risk Youth"
Told All Things Are Possible
2018 Passport to Life Career & Education Expo Inspires
Troubled Youth to Take the Right Path*

At a time when many troubled youth think their life paths are set, an annual program shows them an alternative: youth can achieve a successful future no matter what happened to them in the past.

Passport to Life celebrates its 9th year sharing educational and career opportunities with the County's probationary youth. The program has been so successful; it has expanded to include young people who may not be involved in the juvenile justice system but may be at risk or are in diversionary programs. The event will be held on **Friday, August 10, 2018 at the San Diego City College campus (1313 Park Boulevard) from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

The goal of Passport to Life is to show youthful offenders, or those who are headed in that direction, they can change the path they are currently on. The annual program provides young people with information, tools, encouragement, education and career resources to help them transition into productive adulthood.

Passport to Life is open to youth, 14 to 24 years of age, who are currently on probation, have a probation history, at risk or are in designated diversion programs. The event focuses on the importance of finishing high school, the value of obtaining higher education and of building work-readiness skills.

The event is made up of three components beginning with an inspirational presentation for the young people from someone who has been in their shoes, followed by meaningful workshops and a resource fair. This year's motivational speaker is Alberto Vasquez. Vasquez, who serves on the City of San Diego's Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention is a living example of what the Passport to Life program wants young people to understand: your future does not have to be defined by your past. Homeless as a teen, and having served time in both juvenile hall and state prison, Vasquez made a decision to change his life. He enrolled in City College to start his educational path. He graduated with a Master's degree in biology from UCSD. Now, married father of four, he is an educational advocate for marginalized groups and works to encourage more youth to enter the STEM or Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics fields.

Passport to Life is a collaboration between the San Diego Superior Court and the County of San Diego's Probation Department, along with numerous public organizations.

"It is always so heartwarming and encouraging to see our youth involved in juvenile justice, recognize they can be successful regardless of their past. Since we began this program, we have had many youth make the most of this event, including enrolling at San Diego City College and successfully get off probation. Some even acknowledge but for Passport to Life, they would never have known about the opportunities that exist" says San Diego Superior Court Judge Carolyn M. Caietti.

(MORE)

“Probation Officers work tirelessly to be positive influences and role models for youth who have entered the justice system. Passport to Life is an important event that helps youth successfully complete their probation terms by offering resources not normally available in one location. The collaboration between public agencies and service providers is a terrific example of the community working together to make San Diego a thriving region for all young people” says County of San Diego’s Chief Probation Officer Adolfo Gonzales.

The event will kick off with Mr. Vasquez’ presentation followed by multiple breakout workshops with topics such as:

- *Life After High School – Why Going to College is Important*
- *Be Smart About Money – We Can Help*
- *Science in the New Millennium: Jobs of the 21st Century.*
- *Sealing Your Record*

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

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 County Office of Education
- San Diego County District Attorney’s Office
- San Diego County Public Defender’s Office