



COUNTY OF MONTEREY CAO Weekly Report

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SPECIALREPORT



(L-r) Sheriff Stephen Bernal, HiSET graduates Brian Banyard and Josue Castillo, Undersheriff Michael Moore, Programs Sergeant Sally Pritchett.

County Notes

- > The Monterey County Restorative Justice Commission and Restorative Justice Partners will offer a ["Justice That Heals" conference](#) April 23rd.

Jail Celebrates Inmate Academic Achievements

Earning a high school diploma is a milestone in everyone's life. It's an even more meaningful event when you will be able to use that education and milestone to move your life in a new direction.

The Monterey County Sheriff's Office Corrections Operations Bureau recently recognized eight inmates for educational achievements earned as part of the Bureau's Programs Unit. Two of the eight were singled out for a particular achievement - passing their High School Equivalency Test (HiSET).

Six others earned individual certificates for completing related courses such as Mathematics, Social Studies and Science.

To celebrate the High School Equivalency achievement, jail staff gave the two inmates who earned their diploma the ceremony that goes along with such a milestone, complete with cap and gown. Sheriff Steve Bernal, members of the Inmate Programs Unit and Salinas Adult School staff were on hand to celebrate and congratulated the inmate students on their accomplishment.



HiSET graduate Brian Banyard (center) receives his equivalency diploma as other student inmates applaud during the Programs Unit special graduation ceremony.

“The HiSET Program is invaluable and we recognize the importance of the student inmate population re-entering the community with an education,” says Sheriff Bernal. “I hope to see the GED graduation rate rise at the jail and the recidivism rate decline. We have a great staff and collaborative partners that make this work.”

The opportunity for inmates to earn their high school equivalency diploma comes through the Programs Unit, which provides educational services, opportunities and personal development for inmates. The jail has offered inmates high school equivalency programs in the past, but last year

began a collaboration with the Salinas Adult School to specifically offer HiSET. Inmates who complete the program receive their diploma from Salinas Adult School and the school maintains the inmate student’s educational records, allowing them to request any needed transcripts or letters upon release. If inmate students begin their HiSET work but can’t complete the program while incarcerated, they can enroll at the Salinas Adult School after their release to continue their education.

HiSET is offered to interested inmates that are sentenced and eligible to participate in education programs at the jail, and they can take as long as needed to complete. At the ceremony, one of the participants described HiSET in this way: “These types of programs give us a sense of accomplishment and hope for a better future.”

“It is our hope the graduates or students become aware of the opportunities the Salinas Adult School provides,” Sheriff Bernal adds. “The education they receive here may be a spark that motivates them to recognize the value of education as a benefit to their own personal development and future.”

Natividad Medical Center Craft Fair Showcases County Artists

If you love handmade items made by local craftspeople, you don't have to look beyond the county 'family' for some amazing artisans.

Several times a year, the Natividad Medical Center Volunteer Auxiliary organizes a Craft Fair, giving employees a chance to show off their talents and sell their creations. The latest fair was held on Friday, March 25th. Ten artists brought their wares, setting up in the hospital 'quad' area under sunny skies.



Volunteer Auxiliary Office at 755-4215.

Items ranged from wearable art to garden décor and lots of handmade specialty items. This is a very popular event, drawing some 400 shoppers to the quad!

If you'd like to be notified about the next fair or would like to participate, contact the Natividad Medical Center



One of the craft fair vendors shows a shopper her creations (above). A wide variety of hand crafted items greeted shoppers in the Natividad Medical Center quad (left).

Carmel Valley Library Gets a 'Star'

The Carmel Valley Branch of the Monterey County Free Libraries is proving once again that it is the little library that can, and does.

For the third consecutive year, the library has been awarded the Carmel Valley Business Star Award in the Non-Profit Agency category. These awards are sponsored by the Carmel Valley Chamber of Commerce.



Dee Carbajal, Homework Center Coordinator (above left) and Branch Manager Jennifer Smith (above right) are all smiles attending the Night with the Stars gala event to receive the library's Star Award. At right, the Star Award.



The Chamber gives out awards in a variety of categories each year. Voting is open to the public and the winners were recognized at the Night with the Stars gala event at Quail Lodge on February 28th.

The other two finalists in the non-profit category were the American Red Cross and the Carmel Valley Historical Society.

"We can't thank the community enough for all the support they have given us," says Branch Manager Jennifer Smith, who is characteristically modest about the award. "Our library is indeed a special place and it's a privilege for us to be a part of this community."

Congratulations to the Carmel Valley library staff for their outstanding job of serving the community at this very busy branch.