One Dream at a Time

By Carlos Villatoro
Public Affairs & Media Officer

The Monarch Justice Center has a soothing effect that reminds people who walk through its halls that no matter what they are going through, there is a lot of good in the world and people who care. It’s by no accident.

Monarch Justice Center leaders chose the facility’s yellows, light blues, and pastels of various intensities with careful consideration for the people who would eventually walk through its doors. The colors, wall décor, furniture and other artifacts are small but impactful consolations to the people who turn to the Monarch Justice Center during some of their worst times.

They come from all walks of life, ethnicities, professional backgrounds and education levels, but the one thing that binds them together is that they have all been victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking or elder abuse.

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The tragic death of Los Angeles County Deputy Ryan Clinkunbroomer triggers many emotions for law enforcement and the communities we serve.

I am sad and furious at the tragic loss of life. I have enormous sympathy for his family, his new fiancée, his friends and colleagues.

His death reignites my concern for the safety for our local law enforcement and my commitment to my role in the creation of a safe community for all who live and work here.

Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Deputy Ryan Clinkunbroomer, age 30, was on patrol on the evening of September 16, 2023, when the man who is accused of murdering him, 29-year-old Palmdale resident Kevin Salazar, shot him to death while he sat in his patrol vehicle at a red light.

It was a senseless and cowardly act that took the life of the eight-year veteran of the Sheriff's Department, who just four days earlier proposed to his girlfriend and was engaged to be married according to Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna.

While Los Angeles County is far removed from Napa County – separated by demographics, economy, political lines, and distance – the slaying of Deputy Clinkunbroomer touches home to those in Napa as we are all part of the greater law enforcement family who choose to protect and serve.

Everyone at the Napa County District Attorney’s Office and I offer their deepest condolences to the Deputy Clinkunbroomer’s family, colleagues, and friends. Rest easy.
The Courage to Care
A small bed, large enough for only a child, is situated in a room that lies in the rear portion of Monarch Justice Center. This area is known as the Courage Center and the bed is a medical table where center staff conducts physical examinations on youths, searching for signs of abuse and trauma. They look for critical evidence that can be used to prosecute the people responsible for committing the crimes.

As Napa County District Attorney Allison Haley explained the purpose of the examination room to a group who recently ventured from Calistoga to take a tour of the center, the dignitaries exchanged looks of sadness and empathy.

Not far from the examination room is an interview room full of toys and a couple of cozy chairs. It looks like any other room found at a daycare center, but this room contains a two-way mirror. On the other side of the mirror, is a room full of sophisticated recording equipment to capture both the images and sounds of interviews conducted next door. A microphone setup is also one of the room’s key features, allowing for the interviewer to receive guidance, should they need it, from another person monitoring the interview.

The setup is designed this way so that the person who has been victimized does not have to repeatedly share their story – forcing them to relive the incident and be re-traumatized by it.

Avoiding the re-traumatization of victims is paramount to the center’s mission – to be a place where victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence may receive critical services without having to go from department to department for help or to talk with law enforcement. For many victims of sexual abuse, elder abuse, human trafficking or domestic violence, simply telling the story to everyone who requires it as part of the process to receive services, is to relive the trauma. Since the center opened its doors to the public, dozens of individuals who have needed its services have received them.

Dare to Dream
The dignitaries from Calistoga – which included

Audra Pittman, Calistoga Joint Unified School District superintendent, Stephanie Allan, lawyer and Napa County Library commissioner, Trina Justman, Director Associate of Well Being at Blue Zones, and Eric Reichert, CEO of the Calistoga Chamber of Commerce – were interested in touring the Monarch Justice Center in hopes of receiving insight and guidance that can be used to someday open an Upvalley annex of the family justice center.

To that end, they had several questions for Allison. They wanted to know about funding sources for the center, hours of operation, how it is staffed, and if the First Street building where services are provided is owned or rented.

“No yet, but I will one day own a building,” Haley told the group, answering the latter question. “One dream at a time.”

The dignitaries met Jessica Solano, the DA’s forensic interviewer, and Anais German-Castaneda, a longtime Victim Witness Advocate for the DA’s Office. They met Shea Hunter, the center’s charismatic Executive Director who helped lead the tour, and some of her staff.

Opening a Monarch Justice Center in North County is not outside of the realm of possibility, according to DA Allison Haley, but it will take some careful planning.
INSIDE THE DA’S OFFICE

Napa County DA Investigators Join Statewide Colleagues at Annual CDAIA Conference

On September 4-8, members of the Napa County District Attorney’s investigative staff attended the annual California District Attorney Investigators Association Conference (CDAIA).

This year it was held in Monterey and attended by approximately 250 people from throughout the state of California.

The theme of this year’s conference was “Victim-Centered Justice” and included courses on Behavioral Analysis-Victimology, Surviving a Critical Incident, the Kristen Smart Trial, Fentanyl 187, Science Based Interviewing, Tech Savvy Trial Exhibits, Cold Case DNA, Law Enforcement Wellness, Real Estate Fraud, and Trans National Fraud.

The Annual Training Conference is a unique opportunity to spend time networking with colleagues, acquire new skills to address the changing demands of our profession, and to share ideas, techniques, and experiences with one another.

The California District Attorney Investigators’ Association was formed in 1955 to establish and maintain a closer relationship between investigators and investigative units of the District Attorney’s offices throughout California and the western United States. Members include District Attorney investigators, police officers, prosecutors, and other district attorney personnel involved in criminal and civil prosecution.

The mission is to provide more effective communications between such offices and to develop ways and means of improving our effectiveness as investigators.

Chief Investigator Leslie Pate has served on the Executive Board of CDAIA since 2014 and just recently finished her time as the President of the association. Lieutenant Ana Baber was recently sworn in at the conference in Monterey as the new Chief Financial Officer on the Executive Board and will continue to represent the county of Napa.

This is an honorable profession and even more so being able to collaborate and represent agencies throughout the entire state of California.
The Napa County District Attorney’s Office would like to formally congratulate John Lipanovich on his promotion to the rank of Lieutenant.

Lieutenant Lipanovich was raised in Napa and a graduate of Vintage High School.

He has been a Police Officer for approximately 20 years, has held a variety of assignments, and has developed a wealth of knowledge and experience throughout his career.

Lieutenant Lipanovich came to the Napa County District Attorney’s Office in September of 2021 after spending a majority of his career at the Napa County Sheriff’s Office.

In his new role, Lieutenant Lipanovich will oversee day to day operations of the Investigations Bureau and lead our team in investigating criminal cases with integrity and fairness, treating crime victims and witnesses with the highest level of respect and dignity, and taking a proactive role in crime prevention through community awareness and education. Congratulations Lieutenant Lipanovich!
October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and I recently met with veteran Napa County District Attorney Prosecutor Agnes Dziadur to record a podcast regarding domestic violence and how the Napa DA’s Office handles these cases.

Agnes leads the Napa DA’s Family Violence Unit – which also encompasses cases of violence among non-romantically involved family members – and has prosecuted domestic violence cases in Napa County for the past three years.

By virtue of the many years prosecuting domestic violence cases, with a previous stint handling the domestic violence caseload at the Napa DA’s Office 9 years ago, Agnes is considered a subject matter expert on the topic and had a lot to say about it.

Domestic violence touches people from all walks of life, socioeconomic and financial backgrounds, and ethnicities and cultures, and can have long-lasting physical, psychological, and economic effects on families, she said.

Agnes explained some of the challenges she must overcome in some of the cases she prosecutes including when a victim attempts to minimize an assault, re-cants their testimony, or otherwise will not cooperate with the prosecutorial team which typically consists of a Deputy District Attorney, usually herself or fellow Deputy District Attorney Michelle Roberts, a DA Investigator, and a Victim Witness Advocate.

According to statistics provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 in every 3 women, and 1 in every 4 men, reported having experienced severe physical violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime.

“Those numbers don’t surprise me at all,” she said. “I think that domestic violence and family violence is incredibly prevalent. It’s prevalent in Napa County and in this community just as it is everywhere else.”

Agnes explained that the mission of the Napa County District Attorney’s Office is to keep the community safe and while victims are a top priority for the Office, a common misconception is that the DA’s Office represents the victim directly – it doesn’t, it represents the people. Listen to the entire podcast by visiting our YouTube channel.
IN THE COMMUNITY

Out & About

K-9 Training with the Napa Sheriff’s Office 8/31/2023

Republican Central Committee Meeting 9/20/2023

Liz Alessio Harvest Hoedown 8/19/2023

Photos: Carlos Villatoro, Lauren Weitz and Submitted
People v. Charlene Flenaugh, Alysha Ramsey, & Myeshia Woodward

Charlene Charla Lee Flenaugh, age 33, Alysha Ishe Ramsey, age 25, and Myeshia Nicole Starr Lucas Woodward, age, 34, are charged with evading an officer, willful disregard; evading an officer against traffic; grand theft of real property; and receiving stolen property. The three women are accused of entering Ulta Beauty in Napa and stealing a large quantity of items.

Ms. Flenaugh and Ms. Woodward are additionally charged with the special allegation of 2/3 strikes (two priors), which consist of robberies that occurred in the Counties of Alameda (Flenaugh), San Francisco and Contra Costa (Woodward). The two women are also charged with increasing seriousness of priors/sustained petitions, prior prison term, and prior poor performance on probation or parole; and Ms. Woodward is charged with violation of probation or parole.

In addition, the trio of women are charged with the special allegations of planning, sophistication, professionalism; great monetary value; and violent conduct. The women were last in court on September 29, 2023, for a plea/setting hearing. This case is being prosecuted by DDA Shashawnya Worley.

People v. Darryl Clinton Pridmore

Darryl Clinton Pridmore, age 55, is charged with arson of an inhabited structure or property, and the special allegation of arson during a state of emergency.

It is alleged that Mr. Pridmore purposely set fire to his Capell Valley Road home on August 29, 2020, during a declared State of Emergency.

The defendant was held to answer to all charges/allegations at the preliminary hearing held on August 25, 2023. Mr. Pridmore last appeared in court on September 12, 2023, for an arraignment hearing in which he entered a plea of not guilty to all counts, and a denial to all special allegations and/or enhancements of the information.

Mr. Pridmore is scheduled back in court at 9 a.m., on October 24, 2023, in Department 1 of the Napa County Superior Court. DDA Colleen McMahon is handling the case against Mr. Pridmore.

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People v. Andrew Kenneth Dixon

Andrew Kenneth Dixon, age 33, is charged with attempted murder; assault with a deadly weapon; and attempted first degree burglary, person present. In addition to the aforementioned charges, Mr. Dixon is charged with the special allegations of violence, cruelty, viciousness or callousness; use of a weapon; violent conduct.

The defendant appeared in court on September 19, 2023, for an arraignment hearing, in which Mr. Dixon was advised of the charges against him and appointed a public defender, however did not enter a plea. He last appeared in court on September 27, 2023, for a plea/setting hearing in which the case was continued to October 11, 2023, 9 a.m., in Department 1 of the Napa County Superior Court. DDA Kristen Orlando is prosecuting the case against Mr. Dixon. Victim Witness Advocate Anais Germán-Castañeda is assisting with the case.

People v. Derrick Allen Holland

Derrick Allen Holland, age 46, is charged with a lewd act upon a child. Mr. Holland last appeared in court on September 26, 2023, for a plea/setting hearing. During the hearing, Napa Superior Court Judge Mark Boessenecker denied a 995 motion filed by the defendant’s attorney, Thomas Mass, to dismiss the case based on lack of evidence presented at the preliminary hearing. A 995 motion is a motion that challenges the sufficiency of the evidence presented during a preliminary hearing. The granting of a 995 motion means that some or all of the charges against the defendant will be dismissed, and will not proceed to trial.

The Honorable Judge Boessenecker further continued the plea/setting hearing until 9 a.m., October 25, 2023, in Department 1 of the Napa County Superior Court. The 995 motion in this case was handled by Law Clerk Lauren Noga, supervised by DDA Kecia Lind, who is prosecuting the case against Mr. Holland. Additional support is being provided by SAVS Victim Advocate Christina Gomez.

People v. Eduardo Rios Cruz

Eduardo Rios Cruz, age 59, was convicted of sexual battery.

The two-day jury trial against Mr. Cruz took place in late September and the jury found true that Mr. Cruz committed misdemeanor sexual battery during an incident that took place on February 9, 2021, at Safeway in St. Helena.

The defendant is scheduled to appear for sentencing at 8:30 a.m., on October 30, 2023, in Department 2 of the Napa County Superior Court. The case against Mr. Cruz was prosecuted by DDA Brittney Murray.

People v. Edward Leroy Cagle

A Napa jury extended the commitment of Edward Leroy Cagle, age 50, to a state hospital. Napa County Superior Court Judge Mark Boessenecker ordered the defendant to be committed to the Department of State Hospitals at Coalinga, or other facility as designed by the Department of State Hospitals, from December 11, 2023, to December 11, 2024.

Mr. Cagle’s jury trial, which took place in late September, was concluded after two days and the jury found the petition to extend Mr. Cagle’s OMD (Offender with Mental Disorder) commitment true within 20 minutes of deliberations. DDA Katie Susemihl argued the case on behalf of the people.
The Power of Purple

Join us for a free community event for domestic violence awareness

COHOSTED BY THE SARAH LESLIE FOUNDATION, THE MONARCH JUSTICE CENTER & NEWS

Informational booths tabled by Napa Valley non profits. Come learn about our communities resources!

Oxbow Commons
1268 McKinstry St.
Napa, CA 94559

12 - 4 PM

FREE EVENT

Live music, family fun games, food, drinks & More.