



Nevada Department of Corrections Salutes Post Category III Graduating Cadets

The Nevada Department of Corrections celebrated the graduation of a remarkable cadet class that left no doubt about their dedication and determination.

The Correctional Peace Officer P.O.S.T. Category III graduation ceremony, held on August 25 at the Stewart Gym, was a testament to the journey undertaken by 13 individuals as they took their first steps into the corrections field.

The ceremony commenced with inspiring speeches and a sense of camaraderie, following a standing ovation by their supporters, and loved ones.

What set this class apart from others was not only the impressive number of graduates, but also their resounding success throughout the defense tactics training period, taught by Correctional Officer Trainee Michal Orzel. Among the graduates, Kalina Nieves and Esmerelda Castaneda, radiated confidence as they shared their experiences.

"I liked the self-defense," Nieves said. "I know this job is harder than a normal one, but you gain so much knowledge through it."

"It really opens your eyes," added Castaneda.

Graduate Nicholas Johnson's journey revealed an unexpected transformation when training in the defensive tactics class.

"I may not be a big person but being able to handle someone like Orzel showed me that I was able to do that," Johnson said. "The defense training changed a lot of us, it was a big deal."

The ceremony wasn't short of inspiration from the department's leadership either as NDOC Director James Dzurenda shared his pride to the graduates with his words.

"I guarantee your neighbor will know who you are," he said. "They may not know your name, but they'll know what you do. You are representing your community."

Deputy Director Kristina Shea concluded the ceremony encouraging graduates to never stop pursuing their highest aspirations.

"Be curious learners and be persistent," she said. "There are a lot of leadership opportunities in this field, and you have to be willing to grow."

Apart from their intensive training, the graduated correctional officers are poised and eager to step out and take on their new roles.

"If we can do this, we can handle anything," said graduate Justin Morgan. "I'm excited to get out there and get started."

Graduating Class of 23-PST-01N Correctional Peace Officer P.O.S.T. Category III:

Esmeralda Castaneda, Lyon County Sheriff's Office

Robert Freedle, Northern Nevada Correctional Center

Nathen Hensley, Northern Nevada Correctional Center

Nicholas Johnson, Northern Nevada Correctional Center

Colby Mason, Northern Nevada Correctional Center

John McCurnin, Northern Nevada Correctional Center

Justin Morgan, Northern Nevada Correctional Center

Kalina Nieves, Northern Nevada Correctional Center

Richard Schwitters, Lovelock Correctional Center

Dylan Sieber, Northern Nevada Correctional Center

Vincent Stubbs, Northern Nevada Correctional Center

Mario Zamora, Northern Nevada Correctional Center

Achievement Awards

Academic Instructor – Erik Ortiz

Tactical Instructor – Michal Orzel

Top Shot – Richard Schwitters

Academic – Dylan Sieber

Class Leader – Kalina Nieves