

SFPD Holds Denim Day Event in Solidarity with Sexual Assault Survivors 24-037

Image



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San Francisco Police hosted a Denim Day Event at Police Headquarters on Wednesday in solidarity with sexual assault survivors around the world. The purpose of the event is to support survivors, acknowledge advocates in the field, and educate our members and attendees about all forms of sexual violence. The SFPD recognized nine individuals during the event who have dedicated their careers to supporting victims and survivors of sexual violence and have served as tireless advocates in the field.

The origins of Denim Day date back to a court case in Italy in 1998, where a rape conviction was overturned because the victim was wearing tight jeans. The court's decision implied consent, suggesting that the jeans could only have been removed with the victim's assistance. This ruling sparked global outrage and led to the establishment of Denim Day on the last Wednesday of April each year as a symbol of protest against erroneous and destructive attitudes about sexual assault.

"Sexual assault remains a pervasive issue, with statistics indicating that about 1 in 5 women and 1 in 71 men will be raped at some point in their lives. Denim Day serves as a reminder that we must continue to fight against the culture that normalizes and perpetuates sexual violence," said Police Chief William Scott.

"Our city is committed to supporting survivors and advocating for a safe and respectful environment for all. On Denim Day, we encourage everyone to wear denim as a visible means of participating in this important cause. Let us use this opportunity to educate ourselves and others about the realities of sexual violence and to advocate for change."

The 2024 Denim Day Award Recipients are as follows:

SFPD Inspector Anthony Flores has served San Francisco for 42 years and has dedicated his career to helping survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking, and elder abuse.

SFPD Inspector John Keane is currently assigned to the Special Victim's Unit and investigates hundreds of domestic violence and stalking cases. He is sought after for his expertise in the many disciplines of the Special Victim's Unit.

Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) Gloria Samayoa with San Francisco Human Services has more than 20 years of experience working with children and families who have experienced trauma and has the difficult task of interviewing our most vulnerable population – children who have been victims of crime.

Assistant District Attorney at the Child Abuse/Sexual Assault (CASA) Unit Melissa Demetral was instrumental in getting a 50-to-life plea agreement for one of the most heinous offenders by locating additional evidence and witnesses in a case.

District Attorney Investigator Rich Niven has been in law enforcement for 18 years and is currently assigned to the CASA Unit where he has investigated both adult and child sexual assault cases.

Team Lead for the San Francisco District Attorney's Office CASA Abigail "Abby" Cordova has been with SFDA's office since July 2017 and is a dedicated Human Trafficking advocate. She works closely with law enforcement to support victims of crime.

CASA advocate Cindy Pelayo joined the SFDA's office in 2019 and has provided support and advocacy for numerous survivors navigating the criminal justice system including a victim from the UK whom she arranged travel accommodations for and provided crucial support during the survivor's testimony during the jury trial.

CASA/JJC Advocate Gabriela "Gabby" Bayol has been with the SFDA's office for 2 years and is passionate about serving survivors of crime and advocating for youth.

Jessica Thayer is a board-certified **Physician Assistant and trained Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner** dedicated to serving victims of sexual assault and serves as the Clinical Forensic Manager at the Rape Treatment Center at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center.

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