



Nomination Form

POST Excellence in Training Award

Application for 2015 Nominees



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Section 1. Nominee Information

1. Award Category (select one only) ☒ Individual ☐ Lifetime ☐ Organizational

2. Nominee Theresa Dawson

3. Title (if applicable) Sergeant

4. Agency/Organization (if applicable) Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

5. Mailing Address

6. Contact Numbers

Section 2. Nominator Information

7. Name Randall Harris

8. Title Lieutenant

9. Agency/Organization Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

10. Mailing Address

11. Contact Numbers

12. Department Head/CEO

13. Signature

Complete all remaining sections. Attach additional pages if needed.

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Section 3. Justification for Nomination – REQUIRED

14. Describe the individual's or organization's purpose and training responsibility.

Sergeant Theresa Dawson is a 26 year veteran with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. She was first assigned to Lancaster Station as a new Patrol Deputy in 1994. During her tenure at Lancaster Station as a Deputy Sheriff, she worked patrol assignments, Crime Prevention / Community Relations and also Detective Bureau. After promoting to Sergeant in 2001 and transferring to Custody Division, she returned to Lancaster Station in 2006. In 2011, she was assigned as the Crime Prevention / Community Relations Unit Sergeant.

Sergeant Dawson wears many hats here at Lancaster Station, her duties are not just limited to the Crime Prevention Unit. She is also the Reserve Coordinator, Search and Rescue Coordinator, Disaster Preparedness Coordinator, Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Coordinator, and the Explorer Post / Explorer Academy Supervisor.

Sergeant Dawson is a member of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's Crisis Negotiation Team and has been part of the Department's Peer Support program for fifteen years. She is a Post Certified Instructor for the Sheriff's Academy where she has taught the Domestic Violence learning domain for the last nine years.

Even before Sergeant Dawson was the Crime Prevention Sergeant, she was heavily involved with the community in the Antelope Valley. She contributes to the community both on and off-duty, many times spending her days off at charity and victim benefits events. Sergeant Dawson is concerned about the victims of crimes in our local community and she is a strong believer in educating the public on how to prevent people from becoming victims.

15. Describe the nominee's overall achievement.

From 1998 through 2014, she was on the Board of Directors for the Antelope Valley Domestic Violence Council Valley Oasis (AVDVC) and for fourteen years, she served as the Board president. Valley Oasis is a non-profit organization dedicated to eliminating domestic violence, social violence and homelessness. These goals are achieved through education, intervention, shelter and supportive services. Even though Sergeant Dawson no longer serves on the Board of Directors, she still volunteers for Valley Oasis on a regular basis; including the self-defense classes she teaches through the group.

Sergeant Dawson is also a volunteer with the American Red Cross and she currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and the Antelope Valley Disaster Relief Network (AVDRN).

One of her favorite duties here at Lancaster Station is being the Explorer Post and the Explorer Academy Supervisor. She takes pride in developing discipline and responsibility in our young community members. Many Explorer Post graduates go on to have careers in law enforcement and/or the military. Part of her responsibilities as the Explorer Post Supervisor require her to work every Saturday. With her many commitments and collateral duties, working every Saturday can be burdensome, but because of her love and dedication to the community and the youth of our community, she refuses to allow another sergeant to take that position to free up her schedule.

Sergeant Dawson is connected to the community of the Antelope Valley by constantly working with victims, the poor and the disabled.

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Section 3. Justification for Nomination *continued*

16. Give explanations for each of the following three criteria to support your nomination.

a) Innovation

As previously mentioned, Sergeant Dawson is dedicated to the community of the Antelope Valley and one of her priorities is the safety of women. Her desire to keep the women of the Antelope Valley safe and educated in the area of self-defense was something that Sergeant Dawson always carried with her from the very beginning of her career with the Sheriff's Department. When Sergeant Dawson first became the Crime Prevention / Community Relations Deputy in 1998, she immediately began putting her desire to help women in place. Initially, Sergeant Dawson and two other female deputies purchased the equipment to start teaching Rape Aggression Defense classes (RAD) by themselves. They taught the four week women's self defense class in Lancaster, Palmdale and the Santa Clarita Valley.

Sergeant Dawson has continued to teach the self defense class for 17 years, but the innovation is not limited to teaching the class, but the fact that she has touched the community through the deputies she has enlisted to help instruct. In effect, it is a teach the teacher scenario. Sergeant Dawson first teaches the deputies she enlists and she trains them to be instructors. In return, the deputies take the caring perspective demonstrated by Sergeant Dawson and share it for the rest of their careers.

Sergeant Dawson has learned so much over her many years volunteering and working with the community, that she applies those lessons in her daily work. She also teaches the POST certified Domestic Violence classes to all Sheriff's academy classes. She has taught the Domestic Violence classes for the past nine years. After her many years of working with domestic violence victims and teaching self defense classes, she brings a very unique perspective to the academy. She not only teaches the recruits the investigative side, she teaches what it is like to be the victim. Because of her experiences, she has empathy and she teaches that perspective to all Sheriff's recruits. The recruits learn from the very beginning of their careers to have empathy for the victims of domestic violence.

b) Impact

Since Sergeant Dawson and the two female deputies began the self defense classes in 1998, they had trained over 900 women by the end of 2000. Sergeant Dawson continued to teach the self defense classes, even after she promoted from deputy to sergeant and left the Antelope Valley to work in the Department's Custody Division. When Sergeant Dawson returned to Lancaster Station as the Crime Prevention / Community Relations Sergeant, she continued to teach the classes. To date, there have been more than 3,000 women take her class with more than 30 deputies assisting her with the instruction over the years. The women who have attended her classes have been from all walks of life, from domestic violence and rape victims, to women in the community that have heard about her classes, to church and business groups. Sergeant Dawson currently has approximately 12 deputies and two sergeants, between Palmdale and Lancaster Stations, who assist her with teaching the classes. Sergeant Dawson's influence does not end with the self defense classes, she trained all of the instructors for the classes and she has taught hundreds of Sheriff's recruits in the academy; All of whom experienced her concern for the Antelope Valley community.

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c) Reputation/Recognition

On December 8, 2009, Sergeant Dawson received the Department's Lifesaving Award for her actions handling a baby not breathing call. Sergeant Dawson arrived at the location to find an eight month old baby bleeding from the mouth and not breathing. She immediately began CPR until an assisting deputy arrived. They continued CPR until paramedics were on scene. The baby was transported to the local hospital where she was treated for a cerebral hemorrhage.

On April 29, 2011, Senator Sharon Runner named Sergeant Dawson "Woman of the Year" for her commitment and dedication to the Antelope Valley

On June 05, 2012, Sergeant Dawson received the Department's Lifesaving Award for an incident which occurred on October 27, 2011. Sergeant Dawson and a deputy from the station responded to an attempt suicide call. They found a man hanging from a rope in the garage. They immediately cut him down and found him to be unresponsive. He was not breathing and had no pulse. They immediately began CPR and continued it until paramedics arrived. The patient's mother sent a letter to the station thanking them for saving her son's life and advising that he had had a full recovery.

On February 13, 2014, Senator Steve Knight, recognized Sergeant Dawson for her "Coffee with a Deputy" program.

Section 4. Support Documentation – REQUIRED

17. Provide a brief list of any supporting documents included with this application.

Copies of Awards- Lifesaving, Exemplary Service

Copy of Senator Runners Recognition.

Copy of News articles regarding self defense classes from 1999.

Pamphlets for the self defense classes.

To complete your application:

- 1) Make sure you have filled in all applicable sections.
- 2) Print and sign form.
- 3) Attach all supporting documents.
- 4) Send your completed application to:



**Excellence in Training Screening Committee
c/o California POST
Executive Office
860 Stillwater Road, Suite 100
West Sacramento, CA 95605**

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Application questions: 916.227.2808 — Janice Bullard

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