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Immediate Release

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## Local Residents Honored by DA's Office with Annual Citizens of Courage Awards

San Diego County District Attorney [Bonnie M. Dumanis](#) today honored nine recipients with the Citizens of Courage Award as a precursor to National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

"The Citizens of Courage recipients overcame life-changing experiences by not only surviving a violent crime, but by also testifying against their attackers," DA Dumanis said. "This luncheon gives us the opportunity to thank them as we maintain our commitment to helping crime victims as well as prosecuting criminals."

This year's recipients were survivors of violent crimes and those who defied threats to their personal safety and testified in court. A facilities dog was also recognized. Honored at the 21st annual ceremony in front of more than 300 guests, this year's Citizens of Courage recipients included:

**Sandy Vinge**, who survived despite being bound, gagged, and left in the trunk of her car after she was kidnapped from her home, and beaten. **Deborah Carr**, who was severely beaten and set on fire by her ex-boyfriend in a domestic violence attack, then testified against him in court. **Jennifer and Matthew Loveless** – He was shot five times by her ex-boyfriend in a domestic violence altercation. Since her husband was shot, Jennifer has shown an enormous amount of strength and courage and testified against the defendant. **Rodil and Caridad Razon** survived a home invasion robbery and attack after being held hostage, suffering numerous injuries. They both carry scars from injuries inflicted by their attacker. **Melanie Cruz** awakened to an intruder straddling her in bed with a knife to her neck and suffered numerous cuts, bruises and swelling from the struggle.

**Dory & Paws'itive Teams** -- Dory is a facilities dog who works with children and mentally disabled adults who have been victims of assault. She provides comfort and emotional support to fragile victims and to their families. **Lynn Chavez** is a San Diego Police Officer who is assigned to the District Attorney's office as a liaison. Dory is her personal dog that she trained for this assignment. It was Lynn's efforts that made this project happen.

Each recipient received a trophy from DA Dumanis, as well as a letter of recognition from Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger Schwarzenegand proclamations by San Diego County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman the San Diego County Board of Supervisors Pam Slater-Price and San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders.

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