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## DA Honors 6 Local Heroes at Inspiring 'Citizens of Courage' Awards

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) honored six brave individuals today during the DA's 34<sup>th</sup> annual Citizens of Courage Awards, held as part of National Crime Victims' Rights Week. This year, National Crime Victim's Rights Week was observed the week of April 21-27 and the theme is "*How would you help? Options, services, and hope for crime survivors.*" As part of this annual event, the DA not only highlights the courageous individuals who survived or witnessed a crime, but also the important services that are offered through the DA's Victim Assistance program. The DA's Office is the largest provider of victim services in the county.



**"The six individuals we are honoring today were placed in dangerous or trying circumstances and responded with courage," DA Stephan said. "By recognizing them, we're also shining a light on the many courageous crime victims our office serves in the pursuit of justice every year, and the importance of supporting victims' rights, which is an integral part of our mission at the District Attorney's Office. I am very proud and grateful for the tireless service performed by our Victim Advocates on behalf of crime victims."**

The DA's [Victim Services Division](#) strives to reduce the trauma, fear and pain experienced by victims, witnesses, and family members

affected by crime. The Victim Assistance Program provides comprehensive services to all crime victims, while Victim Advocates are focused on providing assistance to victims of violent crimes. In 2023, they assisted **9,942** new crime victims. This assistance included **814** crisis interventions and **11,865** resources and referrals. Thousands of additional victims and survivors are also served by our North County Family Justice Center: One Safe Place.

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This year, the Citizens of Courage Awards ceremony was held at the Liberty Station Conference Center in front of more than 300 invited dignitaries, elected officials, community leaders and guests. Below are the 2024 Citizens of Courage recipients and links to videos telling their stories:

**MELISSA SPINELLI**

She witnessed a neighbor being attacked, called police, and stayed with the victim to help, passing along his dying words to his family. Deputy District Attorney Helen Kim prosecuted this case.

**ANTONIO JASSO**

A witness to a deadly hit and run incident who followed the driver at his own peril, leading police to arrest him. Deputy District Attorney Hailey Williams prosecuted this case.

**TIFFANY MURPHY**

A security guard who endangered her life by putting herself in between a stabber and his victim. Deputy District Attorney Yoni Fraenkel prosecuted this case.

**NATALIE ORTIZ, RACHEL and SOPHIE MARTINEZ**

A mother and her two daughters who were shot by her boyfriend, called 911, ran for help, and testified against the shooter at trial. Deputy District Attorney Alexandra Lorens prosecuted this case.

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**About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office**

*The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.*

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