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Media Contact

Chris Kim

ckim@jcod.lacounty.gov

Justice, Care and Opportunities Department Celebrates Launch of Innovative Fire Camp Program in Los Angeles County

LOS ANGELES – The Justice, Care and Opportunities Department (JCOD) celebrated its first cohort of participants at the Los Angeles County Training Center (LACTC) Fire Camp in Calabasas on Thursday, March 21st.

JCOD has worked closely with county partners to transform Camp Gonzales, a former juvenile detention center, into an innovative residential job training facility. LACTC Fire Camp participants receive hands-on fire services training, along with complimentary on-site room and board, life skills training and a monthly stipend. The first cohort of 21 participants began their training on February 4 and will spend up to 12 months at the camp.

The launch event showcased the inaugural participants, who were joined by their families, program partners and representatives from various LA County departments who helped make this program a reality.

“After years of dedicated effort and collaboration with our County partners and community-based organizations, it’s truly rewarding to witness first-hand how what once was a place of confinement and hardships has transformed into a symbol of opportunity and growth,” said JCOD Director Judge Songhai Armstead (ret.). “I’m eager to see the positive impact of this program as it offers our transitional-aged youth a second chance and the skills to succeed in our communities.”

“What was once a probation camp is now a center for opportunity where community members will be trained in the fire industry, a field in need of diverse talent,” said Chair of the Board of Supervisors Lindsey P. Horvath, Third District. “I am hopeful this space will support the dreams and success of young Angelenos who deserve our investment.”

Graduates of the program will possess the skills and certifications necessary for careers in fire service and will continue to receive support, including career counseling, job placement assistance, housing resources and, if needed, record expungement services.

The program is entirely voluntary, with priority given to applicants who are affected by the justice system, the foster care system and veterans.

For more information about the LACTC Fire Camp, click [here](#).

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