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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
RELEASE DATE: **Jan. 3, 2017**

CONTACT: Ruthie Retana
(562) 463-3145

Rio Hondo College Police Cadets to Hold Pride Run in San Fernando to Honor Fallen Officer, Raise Special Olympics Funds

WHITTIER – Twenty-nine cadets in the Rio Hondo College Police Academy will hold a Pride Run in memory of San Fernando police Officer Jesse Paderez at 8:30 a.m. **Monday, Jan. 9** in the community of San Fernando.

The run is a tradition for the academy cadets just before their Jan. 11 graduation ceremony. This is the first time that Rio Hondo College has chosen San Fernando for the run. Paderez, a 10-year veteran of the San Fernando Police Department, died in the line of duty on July 17, 2002.

“Rio Hondo College’s police cadets are among the best in the country – our training program is rigorous and demands dedication and honor,” Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. “It is a sign of those qualities that they have chosen San Fernando for this year’s Pride Run. The entire Rio Hondo College community stands with them as they stand up for Officer Paderez.”

Members of Paderez’ family will join in marking the event and the San Fernando Police Department has asked community members to line the streets along the route to support Paderez and the cadets.

“We are encouraging our Rio Hondo College community to join those from San Fernando to honor this courageous police officer and our cadets, who are embarking on their own careers,” Rio Hondo College Board of Trustees President Norma Edith Garcia said.

The event will raise funds for the Special Olympics of Southern California and heighten awareness of issues of inclusion for people with disabilities. A Special Olympic athlete will join cadets. Runners will carry a Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch lit with the Flame of Hope.

“The Pride Run is an unofficial but significant element of our cadet training,” Police Academy Director Walter Allen III said. “It represents a chance to acknowledge the sacrifices made police officers as well as a chance to begin this career in the spirit of community service.”

MORE

Rio Hondo College, located in Whittier, California, is committed to the success of its diverse students and communities by providing dynamic educational opportunities and resources that lead to degrees, certificates, transfer, career and technical pathways, basic skills proficiency, and lifelong learning. For information on the College or its programs, please call 562-692-0921 or visit www.riohondo.edu.

The run will begin and end at Recreation Park, and parking is available at the park, in area city lots and at the San Fernando Mall.

The run can be viewed along Park Avenue in front of Recreation Park, throughout the mall on San Fernando Road, the Civic Center near the police station, court house and City Hall, along San Fernando Mission Boulevard from San Fernando Road and O'Melveny Street, and along Brand Boulevard from O'Melveny Street to Hollister Street.

The run will pass by the school yards of Morningside Elementary School, San Fernando Elementary Street School, San Fernando Middle School on the bike path and St. Ferdinand's School along Hollister Street in hopes the children will witness the run and cheer on the runners.

"We are truly honored to be hosting this Rio Hondo Police Academy Pride Run for the first time. More importantly, we are grateful Officer Jesse Paderez' memory is being honored in such a special way," San Fernando Police Chief Anthony Vairo said. "I worked with Jesse and he was a cop's cop and a man of integrity and honor. I am so pleased his family can join us and has allowed this event to honor his memory."

To donate, community members can go to sosc.kintera.org/scvtvfundraising/riohondo.

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