



NEWS RELEASE May 20, 2014

City Recognizes Employee for “Going the Extra Mile”

The City of Santa Maria is pleased to recognize Daniel Cohen as the newest recipient of its Going the Extra Mile (GEM) Award. Cohen, a Lieutenant in the Police Department, will receive a certificate and recognition at the City Council meeting tonight.

Lt. Cohen displayed great initiative and creativity in brainstorming, and then producing the Santa Maria Police Department’s juvenile gang prevention documentary film “Life Facing Bars.” He conceived the idea of this film and recruited a Cal Poly SLO graduate to assist in its production. Dan and his assistant spent a daunting eight months of filming – in addition to his regular duties. The 40-minute film features former Central Coast gang members now facing life in prison for gang-related crimes, telling their stories, exposing the lies, and telling the stark reality about their experience with the street gang subculture.



The Police Department is using this film to raise gang awareness, and deter at-risk youth from gang involvement. The film is being distributed to our partners in law enforcement and education so they may share it with those most in need. The film has already been viewed more than 63,000 times on YouTube. Lt. Cohen’s film directly addresses a chronic problem affecting Santa Maria and thousands of other communities, and the film’s powerful message has the potential to change many lives for the better, to improve the safety and future of our community.

Criteria for the GEM Award are: Exhibiting effective leadership on specific assignments; demonstrating positive service to a customer or co-worker; going “above and beyond” the call of duty; showing special initiative, creativity, teamwork, cost containment efforts and entrepreneurial spirit in providing a high level of customer service; and consistently embracing the City’s service standards.

Department:	City Manager’s Office
Contact Person:	Mark van de Kamp, Management Analyst II
Telephone Number:	(805) 925-0951 ext. 372
E-mail Address:	mvandekamp@cityofsantamaria.org