



RICHMOND CITY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
RICHMOND CITY JUSTICE CENTER
1701 FAIRFIELD WAY
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23223
C.T. WOODY, JR., SHERIFF

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, September 29, 2015

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SHERIFF HOSTS GRADUATION FOR INMATES

What: REAL Program Graduation
Where: Richmond City Justice Center
When: Wednesday, September 30, 2015, 1:00 p.m.

On Wednesday, September 30, 2015, Sheriff C.T. Woody, Jr. will host a graduation recognition ceremony for men graduating from the RCJC's REAL Program.

Jimmy Santiago Baca will join Sheriff Woody at the ceremony and serve as the keynote speaker. Born in New Mexico of Indio-Mexican descent, Jimmy Santiago Baca was raised first by his grandmother and later sent to an orphanage. A runaway at age 13, it was after Baca was sentenced to five years in a maximum security prison that he began to turn his life around: he learned to read and write and unearthed a voracious passion for poetry. Instead of becoming a hardened criminal, he emerged from prison a writer. His poems were published and became part of *Immigrants in Our Own Land*, published in 1979, the year he was released from prison. He earned his GED later that same year. He is the winner of the Pushcart Prize, the American Book Award, the International Hispanic Heritage Award and for his memoir *A Place to Stand* the prestigious International Award. In 2006 he won the Cornelius P. Turner Award. The national award recognizes one GED graduate each year who has made outstanding contributions to society in education, justice, health, public service and social welfare. Baca has devoted his post-prison life to writing and teaching others who are overcoming hardship.

Also speaking at the ceremony is former resident Aziz Scott, who will be featured on CNN's *This Life with Lisa Ling* and *The Steve Harvey Show* in October. Mr. Scott will be talking about being a REAL Program graduate and the influence it had on him changing his life, as well as his experience filming with Lisa Ling and Steve Harvey.

All media is invited and encouraged to attend.

Media must arrive by 1:00 p.m. in order to be escorted to the secure ceremony location. Please RSVP to Dr. Scarbrough by Wednesday, September 30 at 10 a.m. if you plan to attend.

The Richmond City Sheriff's Office is responsible for maintaining a secure jail and a safe court system, along with seamless inmate transport and civil process to preserve public safety. We remain committed to performing these duties with unsurpassed integrity and professionalism, with progressive training that incorporates best practices and technology. While partnering with the community, we strive to lower recidivism by bridging the gap from incarceration to reentry into the community by addressing criminogenic needs and barriers most closely related to reoffending.

Residents in the RCJC have the opportunity to participate in the REAL (Recovery from Everyday Addictive Lifestyles) Program, which has a purpose of reducing recidivism through ensuring the individual is prepared for re-entry into society. This is done by assisting residents to positively and comprehensively address their addictions and behaviors, while appropriately modifying their thinking. Social learning models and cognitive-behavioral interventions are utilized to help participants restructure and reframe destructive thought patterns while developing healthy coping skills. The focus on behavioral modification inspires members to face their problems and overcome their addictive lifestyles. Graduates have completed several months of classes such as anger management, job preparation, responsibility, life skills, parenting, addiction recovery, and re-entry preparation. Additionally, participants must complete four-phases, which are aimed toward influencing cognitive self-change and consists of over 500 pages of reading and writing. The last criterion to graduate is having at least 60 days of no behavioral infractions, which displays their behavior has been appropriately modified.
