

Don Lugo's school resource officer wins regional award

Don Lugo High school resource officer Dustin Kato has been named a recipient of the 2015 National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) Regional Exceptional Service Award.

Officer Kato, who has been with the Chino Police Department for more than 11 years, has been a resource officer at Don Lugo for two years.

He will be presented the award on July 7 at the 25th Annual NASRO School Safety Conference Awards Luncheon in Florida.

"Officer Kato has an open door policy and it's not unusual for him to be seen counseling and/or meeting with students, staff, and parents outside of organized school events," Don Lugo Principal Kimberly Cabrera said in a nomination letter for the award. "This is especially important in a time where other communities have struggled to maintain positive relations with police."

The school resource officer has presented information to parents of at-risk students at Don Lugo's annual Parent Support Night, and at Chino Valley Unified School District's drug and cyber bullying forums. He has provided training to staff regarding intruders on campus and dealt with traffic safety issues at Don Lugo, Principal Cabrera said. Officer Kato piloted a lobby guard system to ensure that visitors to the Chino campus were safe for students, and wrote a grant that resulted in funds for security cameras on the campus, she said. He has also helped coordinate the Every 15 Minutes impaired driving mock accident at Don Lugo.

"The most recent and outstanding service Officer Kato provided to students was emotional support when one of our students passed away," Principal Cabrera said. "He spent time counseling the basketball team for the loss of their team member. He also coordinated a fundraiser with the basketball team and police department to help the boy's family pay for funeral expenses."

School counselor Steven DeLeon commended Officer Kato for being "instrumental in developing the positive culture within the Don Lugo campus."

"He has been a great role model here on campus and has definitely made a positive contribution to our school," Mr. DeLeon said. "Officer Kato can be directly linked to the overall improvement our campus has seen in recent years."

Officer Kato began his law enforcement career in 2002 as an officer for the Los Angeles Police Department. He joined the Chino Police Department 11 years ago, and has received the City of Chino Police Department's Meritorious Achievement Award and two Life Saving Awards.