



## Saluting Employees

# TDCJ employees receive Governor's Volunteer Service Awards

In April, two TDCJ staffers were recognized at the 2018 Governor's Criminal Justice Volunteer Service Awards ceremony in Austin: Warden Troy Simpson of the Jester I Unit and Arnold Ortiz, a Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Logistics (MAL) Division Inventory Specialist who volunteers at the Ferguson Unit.

Warden Simpson was presented with the Criminal Justice Administrator of the Year award for maintaining unit security while working to support religious programs that enable volunteers to interact and worship along with offenders. Simpson's efforts have helped more than one thousand volunteers who contribute their time to more than 150 volunteer programs at the Jester Complex. His goal is to give all Jester offenders the ability to become productive citizens upon their release.

John Werner, director of the Correctional Institutions Division's Region III, commented on Simpson's work, saying "Warden Simpson has years of experience with TDCJ and supporting volunteers. Time and again, I have been approached by volunteer groups who are appreciative of his support and willingness to facilitate their programs. Region III is very proud of him, and congratulates him."

Arnold Ortiz, a Certified Volunteer Chaplain's Assistant, was presented with the TDCJ Employee Volunteer Award. Ortiz, a MAL employee, began serving as a volunteer in 1994.



TDCJ staff members Arnold Ortiz (left) and Warden Troy Simpson (right) accept their Governor's Volunteer Service awards.

Since the start of his agency career, Ortiz has held weekly church services in Spanish. He began a prayer ministry in 2004 and facilitates special events held in the chapel, with offenders and their family members in attendance. In 2017, he volunteered more than 442 hours, raising his total volunteer service time to more than 3,400 hours.

"He is passionate about his message to the offender population," said Senior Warden Rocky Moore. "He is greatly respected by the offender population and employees at the Ferguson Unit."

At the ceremony, TDCJ Executive Director Bryan Collier commended both Simpson and Ortiz, saying "Each of these award recipients has given countless hours of volunteer service within the TDCJ and we are extremely

grateful for their efforts. They help to make a profound impact on the lives of thousands of offenders and, in doing so, make Texas safer. They are truly everyday heroes."

Texas Board of Criminal Justice Chairman Dale Wainwright added, "These award recipients are giving of their time and gifts to help build better communities throughout Texas. We are extremely thankful for the volunteers we recognize with these awards. They selflessly serve others out of a sense of responsibility to their fellow Texans and to the offenders."

In FY2017, 23,288 agency volunteers donated a total of 395,207 hours of service to TDCJ. ▲