

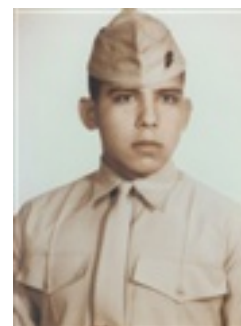
Alfonso Santillan, Jr.



When I first heard Alfonso's story I was very moved and impressed. He is working toward YC's Early Childhood Education A.A.S. degree, and has been in various educational programs here over the years. In 1998 he received an Associate of Applied Science in Computing Systems and Applications. In 1997 he was inducted in Alpha Beta Gamma, International Business Honor Society.

I met him back in 2006 when he served on the Early Childhood Development Advisory Committee and he was also selected to participate on the Family Enrichment Center Advisory Committee as we initiated our fundraising project to build the center. In 1998 he was honored with a Certificate of Achievement for succeeding with quality and integrity at Yavapai College. And again in 2006 he received a Certificate of Achievement, Honor of Academic Excellence and Achievement in the Education Division, Yavapai College.

Now I'd like to tell you a little about his past. Alfonso enlisted in the Marine Corps at 17 years old, and served from 1965-69 with two tours of duty in Vietnam. He was wounded in May 1966 and hospitalized for two months in Japan then returned to combat. He returned to Vietnam February in 1968 as a Squad Leader and Corporal in charge of 14 men, fighting in one of the major battles the TET Offenses, he was again wounded and sent to Long Beach Naval Hospital, California where several surgeries were performed to correct wounds sustained. He was a patient for 14 months then retired from the U.S. Marine Corps as a Sergeant with 60% permanent disability because of combat injuries.



Alfonso is the recipient of two Purple Heart awards, and he retired in 1969 due to combat wounds. He was honored to be inducted into The Arizona Veterans' Hall of Fame Class of 2009.

Santillan is the Devil Pup liaison representative for the central Arizona region. This program was developed by a group of retired Marine Corps Reserve officers working with Camp Pendleton to create a program to help teen boys develop character, responsibility and physical fitness. The program would let the boys see how Marines train and then receive training themselves from volunteer Marine escorts for 10 days.

Since 1993 he has volunteered at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center here in Prescott, Arizona, and helped to establish a Guest Services Program including: Birthday buddies, Care Ambassadors, Courtesy phones, Flowers, Get well cards,

Greeters, Guest shuttle, In room movies, Newspapers, Prepaid phone cards, Treats for troops, and Welcome kits. I assisted in, installing computer and printers in the volunteer office. Also assisted computer end users with software knowledge and solving software problems. He assisted Medicine man Albert Laughter in Native American activities for PTSD patients.

Alfonso served as Chaplain as a Life time member of the Disabled American Veterans Chapter #16 and from 1992-98 and established an outreach program for homeless veterans and their families in the forests of Prescott. "We supplied non-perishables, clothing and friendship. Thanksgiving we received four donated turkeys by local Super Markets, Yavapai College Re-entry Students took the turkey's home and prepared four outstanding Thanksgiving dinners that were took to the homeless forest families. Christmas of 1994 U.S. Marine Donnie (a Vietnam homeless veteran dressed up as Santa Clause) and give gifts to homeless children putting big smiles on their faces. I am so grateful of being a small part of helping our homeless. I have been blessed. "

He reactivated the Yavapai College Veterans Club, and created an information web-site. He organized the "Shining Star" program, collecting donations, and re-donating motorized wheelchairs to veterans not VA-eligible in Arizona. In addition, he reactivated the Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 608.

He has volunteered 100% for the last 20 years. Now 63 years young with a young family 15 yrs, 14, 6, and 20 months old.

There is so much more that I could tell you about him, as he is committed to community service and active in the Freemason Aztlan Lodge #1, Toastmasters International "High Noon Prescott", and YMCA, and has served as a Primavera volunteer pre-kindergarten teacher.

If that is not enough he completed a Green Belt of Moo Duk Kwan Korean Tae Kwon Do, when he was 54 years old. He has his real estate license, and was a proprietor of Del Sol Company, Phoenix.

I am very pleased to share his incredible story with you.