

# The Guardian

Los Angeles Police Relief Association, Inc.



Volume 30, Number 4

Fourth Quarter 2011

## 2011 LAPRA Fitness Challenge

*More Than Six Tons of Fun—A Gigantic Success by Any Measure!*

**The weight is 13,307 pounds. It's roughly the weight of a NASA satellite. Impressively, it also represents the total weight loss of all team members who participated in the 2011 LAPRA Fitness Challenge... and it's our biggest loss ever!**

Partly cloudy skies could not dampen the enthusiasm of the more than 500 team participants, family members and friends who arrived at Elysian Park Police Academy athletic field on October 19 for the 2011 Los Angeles Police Relief Association (LAPRA) Fitness Challenge awards event. "Today, everyone is a winner," said Captain Ivan Minsal who emceed the event for the fourth straight



**Captain Ivan Minsal pulls a winning raffle ticket.**

year. In his welcoming remarks, Captain Minsal introduced Chief of Police Charlie Beck who thanked LAPRA for the phenomenal success of this year's challenge and emphasized how critical healthy employees are to the Los Angeles Police Department. "You men and women are our greatest asset," he said. "When you take care of yourself we ALL win. Thank you for your participation and for your commitment to improving your health."

Representatives from Anthem Blue Cross, Kaiser Permanente and UnitedHealthcare were on site to provide employees with health plan information and gift bags. Raffle tickets were distributed for a variety of prizes to encourage employees to continue their wellness journey. A heart-healthy lunch of chicken, turkey, salad, grilled vegetables, fruit and yogurt was served. The LAPRA 90-day Fitness Challenge is open to all LAPD sworn and civilian employees each year at no cost. ■



**Chief of Police Charlie Beck addresses Fitness Challenge participants, family members and friends at the 2011 LAPRA Fitness Challenge awards event.**

## Annual Holiday Open House Luncheon

The Directors and Staff of the Los Angeles Police Relief Association, Inc., Los Angeles Retirement Benefit & Insurance Association, Inc., and Los Angeles Police Protective League invite you to join us for our Annual Holiday Open House Luncheon:

**Date:** Thursday, December 1, 2011

**Time:** 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**Location:** Los Angeles Police Relief Association, Inc.  
600 N. Grand Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**We Hope You Will Join Us!**

# LAPRA

LOS ANGELES POLICE RELIEF ASSOCIATION, INC.

## Grand Prize Team Winner in LAPRA 2011 Fitness Challenge Training Division (Elysian Park): Individual Commitment to a Group Effort

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” The words belong to Henry Ford, but the sentiment was very much a part of the Training Division’s philosophy throughout the 90-Day Fitness Challenge. As Grand Prize Team Winner, with a cumulative loss of 15.71%, the Training Division earned \$10,000 for their station fund. According to Sergeant Sam Gong, team co-captain, 16 members of the team lost 25 pounds or more. “Our cumulative loss of 738 pounds may be one for the Fitness Challenge record book,” he says proudly.

“A cohesive team is what kept us going,” explains Frank Morales, electrician for LAPD. A Fitness Challenge participant for the past four years, Morales credits his 24 teammates for keeping him mentally strong and enabling him to go the distance in a jogging mode, not just a walking mode. “Our team captains, Senior Clerk Typist Cynthia Morales and Sergeant Sam Gong, kept us motivated with weekly emails and



**Frank Morales, Training Division (Elysian Park) Team Member**



**The Training Division (Elysian Park) team proudly displays their grand prize award at the LAPRA 2011 Fitness Challenge award event.**

weight posts. They even shared recipes.” In addition, Morales says Captain Michelle Veenstra lead heart pumping boot camps. The team even did line dancing in the gym. Morales is lighter and tighter these days and feels better in every way. “I lost inches and gained a healthy lifestyle,” he says. “It was well worth the cost of new pants.” ■

*“A cohesive team is what kept us going.”*





TOP SIX TEAMS

Team	Prize	Award	Cumulative Percentage Lost
Training Division (Elysian Park)	Grand Prize	\$10,000	15.71%
Information Technology Division (ITD)	1st Prize	\$7,500	12.88%
Teams II Development Bureau	2nd Prize	\$5,500	10.15%
Topanga Area	3rd Prize	\$3,500	9.30%
Hollenback Division—Team 1	4th Prize	\$2,500	9.12%
Risk Management Division (RMD)	5th Prize	\$1,500	8.97%



**Teams II Development Bureau  
2nd Prize**



**Information Technology Division (ITD)  
1st Prize**



**Topanga Area  
3rd Prize**



**Hollenback Division - Team 1  
4th Prize**



**Risk Management Division (RMD)  
5th Prize**

## First Prize Winner in LAPRA 2011 Fitness Challenge

# Christine Pham Stepped Up for the Team

She did not sign up for glory or to be a champion; she stepped up for the team. Even with the \$5,000 Grand Prize envelope in hand, Christine Pham steers the conversation away from her own personal accomplishments. What she prefers to talk about is how her ITD teammates came together and, with one teammate inspiring the other, climbed to success.

She says the leadership of Administrative Lieutenant Chris Berglund kept the team running and reaching new heights—literally. Morning 12-story climbs to the roof of Parker Center, and afternoon 27-story climbs to the top of City Hall did more than build character; it built will and determination. In Pham's case, it powered a champion.

*"It's easy to work hard when everyone around you is working hard."*

With a slight build and little athletic experience to draw from, Pham did not set out to win the Fitness Challenge. Her goal was to support the team and pay tribute to Lieutenant Berglund who retires early next year. "I did not want to let my team down," she explains. "It's easy to work hard when everyone around you is working hard. I'd watch police officers cycling or running in the gym and push myself to keep up with them," she says smiling. "I would keep setting new goals and my teammates motivated me to achieve them." In addition



**Christine Pham**  
1st Prize, Individual

to running, cycling and counting calories, Pham says prayer was a regular part of her workout routine. "I drew from within," she explains. "It made me stronger."

Pham says Michi Slaughter, Mattie Goodrich, Chris Rose Beatty and other ITD supporters provided ample encouragement, as did her mother and three children. "My nine-year-old son would ride his bike through our community and I would run to keep up with him,"

Pham says. "Every week I would weigh in at my mother's house. She is 72 years old and works out on the elliptical for an hour every day. She is my inspiration." Pham plans to use part of her award money for a trip to Vietnam with her mother. "My mother left Vietnam 32 years ago," Pham explains. "This will be her first visit back." ■

*"I would keep setting new goals and my teammates motivated me to achieve them."*



*"Morning 12-story climbs to the roof of Parker Center, and afternoon 27-story climbs to the top of City Hall did more than build character; it built will and determination."*



**TOP FIVE INDIVIDUALS**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Prize</b>	<b>Award</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage Lost</b>
Christine Pham, Information Technology Division	1st Prize	\$5,000	29.66%
Christopher Tan, Risk Management Division	2nd Prize	\$4,000	27.91%
Kenneth Amerson, Training Division (EP)	3rd Prize	\$3,000	24.42%
Rogelio Nunez Jr., Teams II Development Bureau	4th Prize	\$2,000	23.53%
Robert Hernandez, Information Technology Division	5th Prize	\$1,000	23.20%



**Christopher Tan**  
2nd Prize, Individual



**Kenneth Amerson**  
3rd Prize, Individual



**Rogelio Nunez Jr.**  
4th Prize, Individual



**Robert Hernandez**  
5th Prize, Individual

## Fitness Challenge Spotlight

# Ken Amerson Sharing the Bliss

He jokes that he is half the man he used to be, but in reality Ken Amerson, third place winner in the Individual Fitness Challenge, with a loss of 24.42%, is stronger than he has been in years. As a coordinator of the LAPD leadership program, goal setting and perseverance seem to come natural to him. When lab work for knee surgery revealed that his cholesterol level was alarmingly high, he was motivated to make a change. "I just didn't feel right," he explains. I didn't like what I saw in the mirror and was a perfect candidate for heart disease, diabetes or cancer. I did not want to become a statistic."

*"I didn't like what I saw in the mirror and was a perfect candidate for heart disease, diabetes or cancer. I did not want to become a statistic."*

In January, inspired by the book "The China Study," his life took a dramatic turn. Based on research conducted in rural China, "The China Study" details the connection between nutrition and heart disease, diabetes and cancer. The book suggests that people who eat plant-based foods, rather than animal-based foods, will be healthier and more likely to avoid chronic diseases. Amerson gave himself six months on a vegetarian diet to test the study himself. The results, he says, have been sheer bliss—lower cholesterol and an amazing feeling of total well being. "I love sharing my story, he says with sincere enthusiasm. "Everyone should feel this great."

The LAPRA Fitness Challenge was the missing puzzle piece in Amerson's weight loss and wellness pursuit. "I knew where I wanted to go," he explains. "The Fitness Challenge helped me get there. Sharing the journey with 24 motivated and committed Training Division teammates heightened everyone's success. A healthy lifestyle has



**Kenneth Amerson**

made me a better employee and a better person in so many ways. My youngest daughter is three years old," he says smiling, "and I'm looking forward to being around to walk her down the aisle." ■



### 2011 LAPRA Fitness Challenge Team Special Recognition (Cumulative Percentage Weight Loss of 5% and Above)

Team	Award	Cumulative Percentage Loss
Commercial Crimes Division (CCD)	\$500	8.81%
Van Nuys Division - Team 1	\$500	8.10%
Hollenbeck Division - Team 2	\$500	7.84%
Juvenile Division	\$500	7.82%
Detective Bureau	\$500	7.35%
Professional Standards Bureau (PSB)	\$500	7.35%
Internal Audits And Inspections Division (IAID)	\$500	6.91%
Rampart Division - Team "A"	\$500	6.76%
77th Area - Team 2	\$500	6.66%
Major Crimes Division (MCD)	\$500	6.63%
Southeast Division	\$500	6.59%
Devonshire Division	\$500	6.44%
Mission Area	\$500	6.23%
Robbery and Homicide Division (RHD) - Blue Team	\$500	6.20%
Recruitment and Employment Division (RED)	\$500	6.17%
South Traffic Division (STD)	\$500	6.05%
Hollywood Division	\$500	6.00%
West Traffic Division (WTD) - Team 1	\$500	6.00%
Central Traffic Division (CTD)	\$500	5.96%
West Traffic Division (WTD) - Team 2	\$500	5.62%
Rampart Division - Team "B"	\$500	5.50%
Jail Division - Team 2	\$500	5.50%
Robbery and Homicide Division (RHD) - Red Team	\$500	5.49%
Gang and Narcotics Division (GND)	\$500	5.45%
RACR	\$500	5.37%
Training Division (Davis)	\$500	5.32%
Van Nuys Division - Team 2	\$500	5.20%
Force Investigation Division (FID)	\$500	5.17%
Central Division - Team 1	\$500	5.15%

### 2011 LAPRA Fitness Challenge Individual Special Recognition (Cumulative Percentage Weight Loss of 20% and Above)

Name	Cumulative Percentage Loss
Michael Piesik - Training Div (EP)	22.70%
Robert Ruiz - Rampart - Team "A"	22.27%
Kathlene Matthews - PSB	22.17%
Gene Arreola - CCD	21.70%
John Kong - ITD	21.14%
Mark Sauvao - 77th Area - Team 2	20.88%
Yolanda Alaniz - Training Div (EP)	20.77%
Janell Scharbach - PSB	20.50%
Rudy Barragan - Hollenbeck Div - Team 2	20.10%

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## Your Donation Helps Us Take Care of Our Own

The Los Angeles Police Relief and Assistance Foundation (LAPRAF) provides financial assistance and other support to active and retired officers and family members in need. Help the foundation take care of its own by making a donation today. For information on how you can make a donation, please call (213) 674-3724.

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See inside for  
 2011 LAPRA Fitness  
 Challenge Results!

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