

New police chief, same mom

Written by By Molly Ann Howell Managing Editor
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Toadlena-Pablo finds a work-life balance in new role

Now that she is officially Gallup's Chief of Police, Erin Toadlena-Pablo has a whole new set of responsibilities. But she also has the responsibilities of being a mother.

Toadlena-Pablo is a mother to six children: eight-year-old Jayace, 16-year-old Emily, 22-year-old Kymberly, 23-year-old Kiana, 26-year-old Kobe, and 29-year-old Joshua.

Just because most of her kids are older and out of the house doesn't mean Toadlena-Pablo doesn't still face the challenges of motherhood. She said the hardest part about being a mom is

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when the kids leave the nest. In an interview with the *Sun*, she recalled when her first child, Joshua, left for college and how difficult that was for her.

“I think when my son left for college, I cried every day he was gone,” Toadlena-Pablo said. “I made my husband drive every weekend to visit him in college.”

When Toadlena-Pablo started her career with the Gallup Police Department 21 years ago as a detective, it was difficult to leave her children at home. Her daughters Kymberly and Kiana were only babies, and her two sons Kobe and Joshua were in elementary school.

“Having to work a 12-hour shift and not being able to get them ready for the day in the morning and then when I got back [home] they were already asleep and redoing that the next day, that was a lot harder when they were younger,” she said. “But as they got into middle school and high school, I hate to say this, but my kids probably got used to my absence.”

When she was a detective Toadlena-Pablo had times where she was on-call. This meant that her family couldn’t travel or go anywhere too far away from Gallup when she was on-call. Now, as Chief of Police, Toadlena-Pablo is on-call 24/7, seven days a week, every day of the year.

Toadlena-Pablo said she relies on her husband and other family members on the days her demanding job pulls her away from her kids.

“I don’t normally get off at 5 pm, for example the city council meeting is tonight, so I won’t get home until 8 or 9 pm depending on how late the meeting goes. So dinner is not going to be made by me tonight, so I rely on my husband to take care of that, or sometimes my mom will come over and get them dinner,” Toadlena-Pablo explained.

No matter how long Toadlena-Pablo has been with the GPD, she says it’s still difficult to miss out on things with her kids.

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“The days I’m not able to pick them up or to attend events for their school or getting a birthday cake for them for school is really difficult for me,” Toadlena-Pablo said.

But now with her new job she’s found a schedule that works for her and her family. The mornings are her time to spend with family, especially her youngest child, Jayace.

Toadlena-Pablo helps Jayace get ready for the day by doing her hair every morning. This is the mother/daughter duo’s time to check in with each other. Toadlena-Pablo makes sure to ask open-ended questions such as “tell me four things that were amazing yesterday” rather than “how was your day?”

Just like any cop, Toadlena-Pablo knows that her job comes with some scary challenges. According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 224 officers died in the line of duty in 2022 nationwide.

That is always something Toadlena-Pablo keeps in mind, and she said she and her family face each day knowing that there may come a day when she doesn’t come home.

“I think we made it a priority to make sure that when we left one another in the morning or in the evening if I had to work a night shift, that we tell each other that we love each other as if we aren’t going to see each other again,” Toadlena-Pablo. “[We make] sure that we are a cohesive family where we would always have each other’s backs.”

Toadlena-Pablo’s family was front and center at her swearing-in ceremony May 2.

Jayace stood by her mother’s side on stage as she received a blessing during the ceremony. And after the ceremony, Kiana told her mother what it meant for her as a child to see her mother go out into the field.

Toadlena-Pablo shared what Kiana said to the family after the ceremony:

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“I want to tell everyone that every time my mom went to work, I cried for her. I didn’t want her to go, and I wanted her to stay. But I’m really glad she went to work because look at what she’s become today.”

Toadlena-Pablo said it broke her heart to hear her daughter say that.

With Mother’s Day coming up, Toadlena-Pablo wanted to give a shoutout to her fellow female police officers who have children, their families, and the sacrifices they make.

“I’m grateful for the significant others of our female officers, and I’m thankful for their children and their parents,” Toadlena-Pablo said. “It is a great sacrifice to have your parent for the majority of your life in law enforcement, and to have that person leaving to do this job, it is a lot. I just want people to remember to tell their mother to share your feelings and talk how much they’ve influenced you.”

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