



# NEWS RELEASE

Orange County Fire Authority  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Subject: OCFA Recognizes its Best and Bravest at Award's Ceremony**

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**Irvine, CA** – More than 300 people came out to the Orange County Fire Authority's "Best and Bravest" awards ceremony that honors our firefighters and staff employees for their bravery and merits.

Firefighter David Kang was selected Career Firefighter of the Year, Brandon McClintock was named Reserve Firefighter of the Year, Assistant IT Manager John Wieland was chosen Manager of the Year, Nurse Educator Linda Verraster was awarded Staff Employee of the Year, and the Unsung Hero Award was given to the Service Center at RFOTC.

Engineer John Zubas received the esteemed Lifesaving Medal for his heroic actions on a basketball court last year. Zubas was playing in an adult league basketball game at the Tommy Lasorda Field House in the City of Yorba Linda. He saw one of his teammates collapse on the gym floor and immediately began assessing him. Zubas applied the gym's automatic external defibrillator (AED) to his teammate. "John's actions directly contributed to the conversion of the patient's abnormal cardiac rhythm to a more normal rhythm prior to the arrival of our paramedics," said OCFA Fire Chief Keith Richter. "If it were not for Engineer Zubas' actions, the outcome could have been very different for his friend."

The Medal of Merit was awarded to Fire Captain Wayne Chapman for his participation and work ethic in numerous working groups and committee's at all levels of government in support of curriculum development and operational response standards for urban search and rescue nationwide. Through his efforts, Wayne has brought major recognition to the OCFA as one of the leading organizations in the Rescue community. "Wayne's performance, achievements, and service to the OCFA have not only brought recognition but set a standard that all of us within the organization strive to reach," said Chief Richter.

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The Unit Citation was presented to Pilot Karim Slate, Crew Chief Craig Covey, Crew Chief Dave Lopez, Captain Tim Perkins, Engineer Jon Walla, and Firefighter Tim Brooks. On April 3, 2013, OCFA was assisting the Orange County Sheriff's Department with the rescue of two lost hikers in Holy Jim Canyon. While attempting to rescue the hikers, a Reserve OC Deputy Sheriff fell from a rock cliff and sustained major injuries. OCFA Helicopter-2 was assigned to rescue the injured Deputy. Operating in a deep and extremely dangerous canyon, Helicopter-2 and the crew from Truck 9 rescued the injured Deputy. "Fire Pilot Slate maneuvered the helicopter in close proximity to Los Angeles County Sheriff's Helicopter," said OCFA Fire Chief Keith Richter, "performing possibly the most technically challenging rescue in OCFA Air Operations history." Helicopter Crew Chief Lopez operated the hoist while lowering Captain Perkins more than 200 feet into a steep, inaccessible, and dangerous ravine. Once on the ground, Captain Perkins assessed, treated, and prepared to hoist the injured Deputy out of the canyon. Engineer Walla and Firefighter Brooks made their way on foot down the steep ravine to the injured Deputy to assist Captain Perkins. "OCFA Helicopter-2 and Truck 9's heroic efforts, outstanding performance, and attention to duty on this incident, upholds the traditions and honor of the Orange County Fire Authority," said Chief Richter.

Michele Gile from KCAL 9 presented all of the awards to the OCFA employees as she has done so for over eight years and Ryan H. Turner was the emcee for the evening. Coordinated by the Exchange Club of Irvine and OCFA's Ceremonies and Protocol (CAP) Committee, 43 nominees and three honorees were recognized. Special gratitude to those who sponsored the event including Southern California Gas Co., Prime Healthcare Hospitals of OC, City of Dana Point, OC Professional Firefighters Association, Don Dressler Consultants, OC Employees Association, Capital Source Bank, OCFA Benevolent Association, Hoag Hospital, and the OC Chief Officers Association. Special thanks for certificates from Senator Bob Huff, Assembly Member Sharon Quirk-Silva, Supervisor Pat Bates, Supervisor Shawn Nelson, and Supervisor Todd Spitzer.

**To watch the highlight video, click [here](#).**

**To see pictures from the event, click [here](#).**

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*The Orange County Fire Authority is a joint powers authority that serves more than 1.7 million residents in 23 cities and the unincorporated areas of the county.*