



American Red Cross
Orange County

2024 ORANGE COUNTY HEROES AWARDS

Celebrate the Hero Within!

Friday, May 10, 2024
City National Grove of Anaheim

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Media Partner



Heroes Awards Match Partners



Humanitarian Sponsor



Regional Sponsor



Presenting Sponsors



Community Sponsors



Neighborhood Sponsors

Alonzo Family
 Atkinson, Andelson, Loya, Ruud & Romo
 Automobile Club of Southern California
 Lance Britt and Ryan McKinney
 City of Santa Ana
 Susan and Al DeGrassi
 David and Laura Engwall
 Kingston Technology Company, Inc.
 Mia Lomedico and Justin Van Dyk

McNevin Family
 MicroVention
 Moulton Niguel Water District
 MVS, Inc.
 Laura Nguyen
 Providence
 Shawna and Spencer Rinker
 Upland Group – Security
 West Coast University Alumni Association

The 2024 Orange County Heroes Awards videos were produced by Hildreth Media Group, Inc.

Help Prevent Home Fire Deaths and Injuries

This year's Orange County Heroes Awards will benefit the Red Cross Home Fire Campaign.

Most of us don't realize we have just two minutes to escape a home fire — which is the nation's most frequent disaster. That's why the American Red Cross is preparing families to act quickly through our Home Fire Campaign.

Every second counts when there's a home fire. Home fires claim seven lives every day but having working smoke alarms can cut the risk of death by half. The Red Cross Home Fire Campaign helps save lives by installing free smoke alarms in homes that don't have them, and by educating people about home fire safety.

Through *Sound the Alarm* events, which are part of the Home Fire Campaign, the local Red Cross partners with fire departments and community partners to install free smoke alarms and provide Orange County residents with important fire safety education. Together, we meet with local families to install free smoke alarms, help them create a two-minute fire escape plan and share safety information on home fires and other local disaster risks.

Since the program launch in 2014, we have installed more than **21,700 free smoke alarms** and made over **7,900 homes safer** in Orange County.

Nationwide, over **2.6 million free smoke alarms** have been installed and **2,102 lives** have been saved thanks to smoke alarms installed by the Red Cross and partners through the Home Fire Campaign.



Learn more about the Home Fire Campaign.



Please consider donating today. Text the word **OCHEROES24 to 76278** or donate online.

\$25 provides 1 smoke alarm installation

\$50 provides 1 fire clean-up kit

\$250 provides installation of 1 smoke alarm for people who are deaf or hard of hearing

\$680 provides financial assistance for a family impacted by a local disaster, like a home fire



A Little Help Foundation and The Caring Path Foundation Fund will match all donations made at today's event up to \$30,000.

When you donate to the American Red Cross, your donation is used efficiently. An average of **90 cents of every dollar** the Red Cross spends is invested in humanitarian services and programs. The American National Red Cross is registered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions to the American National Red Cross are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. The Red Cross' tax identification number is 53-0196605.



EVENT PROGRAM

Event Co-Chairs

Lance Britt II ▪ David Engwall

Registration and Networking

Presentation of Colors

2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment on Camp Pendleton

National Anthem

Katrina Pesek

Introduction and Welcome

Award Presentations

Animal Welfare Hero Award

Equine Herd at The Shea Center

Corporate Hero Award

Kingston Technology Company, Inc.

Gift of Life Hero Award

Amanda Hildebrand

Disaster Services Hero Award

Dan Lam

First Responder Hero Award

Derrick Ankerstar, Kevin Estrada, and Megan Matchett

Orange County Parks

Youth Hero Award

Olivia Clay

Service to the Armed Forces Hero Award

Connie Mesta

Good Samaritan Hero Award

Fairuz Schlecht

Closing Remarks

2024 Orange County Heroes Selection Committee

Lance Britt II, David Engwall, Terry Bailey, Jennifer Dentino, Sara Garske, Michael Gelormino, Tara Kasmarek, Wing Lam, Carol La Vache, Kristen Lewis, Jill Rawlinson-Baker, Dulce Roca, Rachel Selleck, Chris Venhoff



Chip Yost

Master of Ceremonies

Chip Yost started as a reporter with KTLA in 2007 and has since covered some of the biggest news events of our time. He was at the Vatican when Pope Francis was elected. He was at the 2016 Republican and Democratic National Conventions. He has reported live from hurricane zones in Florida, Texas and Hawaii, and from mass shooting scenes in Uvalde, Parkland, Dallas, Orlando and San Bernardino.

Chip also serves as KTLA's Orange County Bureau Chief, where he has covered wildfires, mudslides and the "snitch scandal" that derailed the prosecution of the man responsible for the worst mass shooting in county history.

Before joining KTLA, Chip worked as an investigative reporter at KUSA in Denver and a general assignment reporter at KOLD in Tucson, KYMA in Yuma, and KGET in San Diego. Chip's reporting has earned him numerous awards, including the duPont Silver Baton, Emmy and Golden Mike.

Chip received his master's degree from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in New York and his bachelor's degree from the University of Cincinnati College of Business, where he majored in marketing and real estate.



2024 ORANGE COUNTY HEROES HONOREES



Equine Herd at The Shea Center *Animal Welfare Hero*

Established in 1978, The Shea Center is dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities through therapeutic horse-related programs. The Shea Center provides equine-assisted services and therapeutic equestrian programs and therapies such as physical, occupational, speech, psychotherapy, and adaptive riding. The Shea Center is a sanctuary where therapy horses and humans form deep connections that promote life-changing wellbeing and healing, transforming lives and reminding us that heroes come in all forms—and some even have hooves.

Presented by 



Kingston Technology Company, Inc. *Corporate Hero*

Kingston Technology has been a steadfast partner of the American Red Cross since 2017. In August of 2023, when powerful and relentless fires tore through Maui, Kingston Technology was there to help. Thanks to Kingston's employees and matching gifts, they supported the Red Cross with a gift of over \$25,000. Kingston Technology has a long history of providing support in times of disaster through corporate gifts and employee giving, supporting Red Cross disaster relief efforts nationally and internationally. In addition to their financial support, Kingston Technology has also hosted Red Cross blood drives and provided Red Cross CPR, AED and First Aid training for its employees.

Presented by 



Amanda Hildebrand *Gift of Life Hero*

Garden Grove resident Amanda Hildebrand has been donating blood for the past 18 years. As of April 2024, she has donated eight gallons of blood. Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood, and blood donors like Hildebrand help patients of all ages, including accident and burn victims, heart surgery and organ transplant patients, and those battling cancer.



Dan Lam *Disaster Services Hero*

Westminster resident Dan Lam has a powerful story of escaping his native Vietnam to Thailand many years ago. During his dangerous months-long journey, Dan found refuge at a Red Cross refugee camp for nearly a year. After making it to the United States, he later married a woman he met at the Red Cross camp years earlier and raised a family in Westminster, Calif. Now, he's giving back to the Red Cross as a volunteer with the Red Cross of Orange County. Dan has been a dedicated Disaster Services volunteer since 2008. In 2023, Dan responded to 57 local disasters—often home fires during late night and early morning hours—to provide comfort and care to those affected. Dan has also deployed for three weeks to help people affected by storms in Guam. When asked why he volunteers, Dan responds: "People deserve our help and I'm paying it forward."

Presented by 



Derrick Ankerstar, Kevin Estrada, and Megan Matchett, *Orange County Parks First Responder Heroes*

On Sunday, April 2, 2023, at William R. Mason Regional Park in Irvine, Orange County Parks park ranger Megan Matchett was notified that a man collapsed, and his lips were turning blue. Without hesitation, she followed her training, notifying dispatch, assessing the man's condition, and quickly beginning CPR. Her fellow park rangers Derrick Ankerstar and Kevin Estrada jumped in to help. Matchett, Estrada, and Ankerstar worked as a team to provide CPR, give rescue breaths and administer an AED until the Orange County Fire Authority arrived and assumed patient care. At that time, thanks to the heroic efforts of Ankerstar, Estrada, and Matchett, the man had regained his pulse. The training, teamwork and swift actions of Ankerstar, Estrada, and Matchett undoubtedly helped save his life.

Presented by 



Olivia Clay *Youth Hero*

her 2-year-old cousin Paisley into the backyard. Shortly after, Paisley accidentally fell into the pool, also pulling Olivia into the water, who was trying to keep her cousin from falling in. While in the water, Olivia quickly yelled for her family, grabbed her cousin, and maneuvered to the poolside to grab a ledge, while holding her cousin in her other arm to keep her from drowning. Olivia continued to hold onto her cousin and call for help. After hearing the cries for help, Paisley's mother jumped into the pool and helped rescue the girls along with Olivia's father, Brandin. Thanks to Olivia's incredible heroism and composure, both she and her cousin were able to survive the harrowing near-drowning experience.

Presented by 



Connie Mesta *Service to the Armed Forces Hero*

Connie Mesta oversees the holiday program at the Los Alamitos Joint Forces Training Base, bringing joy to service members and military families every holiday season. Since retiring from the U.S. Army in 2016, Connie has continued to run the program and has made it her mission to see that every family who requests support through the holiday program receives the help they need. "Every child deserves a wrapped present under the Christmas tree," says Connie. In 2023, the holiday program served more than 90 military families.

Presented by **Goldman Sachs**



Fairuz Schlecht *Good Samaritan Hero*

On the night of December 20, 2022, Fairuz Schlecht and her family were asleep in their second-floor apartment when they were awoken by the sound of smoke alarms due to a fire in her building. After they safely escaped, Fairuz noticed three children screaming from a neighboring second-floor bedroom window with smoke coming from it. Without hesitation, she immediately ran back into the burning building, crawling on her hands and knees to a bedroom where she found all three young children, one of whom was hiding under a bed. Carrying all three children through dangerous smoke and fire, Fairuz was able to again escape to safety with all three children and reunite them with their parents.

Presented by **BRASSTECH**



ANTIS 35 YEARS
KEEPING FAMILIES SAFE & DRY!

THANK YOU...
to all the Red Cross Heroes making an impact in the community!

SAVE A LIFE. DONATE BLOOD AT ANTIS!
Schedule your appointment at www.redcrossblood.org/give
Enter code "Antis"

Creating a world of limitless possibilities.

Proud to support the American Red Cross Orange County Heroes Awards.

Visit one of our local branch locations or find us online at usbank.com.



Member FDIC. ©2024 U.S. Bank 1193903 4/24

Celebrating Courage and Compassion in Our Community.

Thank you to all the 2024 Orange County Heroes!



Congratulations 2024 Orange County Heroes!

Thank you for supporting our community with compassion and purpose. We celebrate you and your commitment to making our community stronger.



#OCHeroes

Facebook: facebook.com/SoCalRedCross

Instagram: [@socalredcross](https://www.instagram.com/socalredcross)

X: [@SoCal_RedCross](https://twitter.com/SoCal_RedCross)

Videos at [YouTube.com/SoCalRedCross](https://www.youtube.com/SoCalRedCross)

Photos from today's event will be shared at [Flickr.com/SoCalRedCross](https://www.flickr.com/SoCalRedCross)

Nominations are accepted year-round at redcross.org/ocheroes

REGIONAL LEADERSHIP

American Red Cross Southern California Region | Leadership Team

Sean Mahoney Regional Chief Executive Officer	Debbie Pari Regional Volunteer Services Officer
Malinda McDonald Chief Operating Officer	Becky Firey Executive Director (Orange County)
Glenn Maddalon Regional Chief Development Officer	Lois Beckman Executive Director (Riverside County)
Debbie Leahy Regional Disaster Program Officer	Yevette Baysinger Executive Director (San Bernardino County)
Daniel Beighley Regional Service to the Armed Forces Director	Ann Anderson Director, Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Program
Christine Welch Regional Communications Director	

Board of Directors | Orange County

BOARD CHAIR
Shishir Shah, Community Volunteer

BOARD VICE-CHAIR
David Engwall, Community Volunteer

Aji Abiedu Jackson Lewis P.C.	Tara Kasmarek UCI Health	Lynton Rowsell EY, LLP
Rick Alonzo DIRECTV	Neetu Khilnani Community Volunteer	Rachel Selleck Providence
Lance E. Britt II The Ayco Company, L.P., a Goldman Sachs Company	Mia Lomedico Call & Jensen	Elyse Shelger, RN CHOC
Tammy Cooper Technologist	Laura Nguyen, RN Community Volunteer	Sasha Shuman, Ph.D. Community Volunteer
Susan DeGrassi Antis Roofing & Waterproofing	Jaelynn Nguyen Youth Advisory Council Chair	Denise Tafoya-McNevin Community Volunteer
Anne Dwyer Snell & Wilmer L.L.P.	Ashwin Rangan (Chairman Emeritus) ICANN	Steve Thronson Healthcare Leader
Michael Gelormino Independent Advisory Services	Mark Rapp SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union	Chris Venhoff U.S. Bank
Phil Grevin Nationwide	Dr. Shawna Rinker Pacific Hospitalist Associates	John Waldeck Pacific Life Insurance Company
Deepa Gupta Accrete Valuations		

THANK YOU!

Valued Community Partners



**American
Red Cross**

Mission

The American Red Cross prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors.

Diversity Vision Statement

The American Red Cross aspires to be an organization fully committed to diversity and inclusion by creating and maintaining a diverse, high-performing workforce of employees and volunteers who reflect all communities we serve; by cultivating a collaborative, inclusive and respectful work environment that empowers all contributors; and by leveraging diverse partnerships — all of which helps to ensure culturally competent service delivery supported by effective community leadership and engagement.