



From the Fire Chief

Dear OCFA Family:

Resilience – a theme woven so deeply into the fabric of the OCFA, it has become synonymous with who we are and what we do. This month's Bulletin is replete with examples of that signature OCFA resilience — from the immigrant journeys of Education Specialist Carmen Cardenas and Firefighter Katya O'Neill to the excellence of our Hand Crews, the role they played in securing \$16.95 million in state funding for a new facility, and Senator Dave Min's recognition of Dylan Van Waarden and Phi Le at the press conference.

But as I sat down to write this message, an email popped into my inbox that so perfectly encapsulated OCFA resilience, I had to share it with you here.

The subject line read, "Battalion Chief Academy 30," and as I scrolled down the list of names of OCFA Captains who successfully completed our BC Assessment Center and are now heading into the Academy, my heart swelled with pride. Now in my fifth year as Fire Chief, I had met and worked with each of these leaders more than once, at the scene of intense firelights, around dinner tables at special events, and during ceremonies for the fallen.

So, when I read these names — from Driscoll, Gibson, Medina and Perez to Yeun, Backoff, McQueen, and Sobro — a smile washed over my face. I knew that each of them had not only lived up to the OCFA tenets of courage and care in their journey to this moment, but they had done so through adversity and with tremendous resilience. This is not unusual for an OCFA academy cohort, as evidenced by the 18 new Fire Captains of Academy 33 I had the honor of congratulating at a promotion ceremony last week.

However, when it comes to resilience, there was one name on this email list of BC Academy personnel that stood out to me: Captain Dan Dufrene. Earlier this year, Dan's name was in a much different agency-wide email that shared the news of an accident that left him in a trauma center with multiple fractures to his spine. And yet, here was his name again, barely six months later, being recognized for successfully completing what is arguably the most rigorous BC testing process in the state.

Of course, when asked about the resilience that spurred his recovery and the ongoing pursuit of a Battalion Chief promotion, Dan exhibited another character trait OCFA personnel are known for: humility. "I didn't do anything," he said, deflecting credit. "It was the support of the agency, Local 3631, the Benevolent Association, my family, and everyone who called, texted, visited, and encouraged me throughout this process."

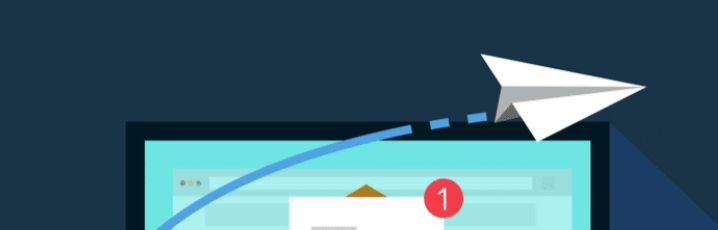
And if anything compounds the power of resilience with greater impact than humility, it is a commitment to grow and better serve our communities. Dan is not alone in that endeavor, as evidenced by the many inspiring stories of resilience, benevolence, and leadership throughout this and every Chief's Bulletin.

That is who we are, and as we enter the peak months of what has become a year-round fire season, I take comfort in knowing that is who we will always be.

Sincerely,
Brian Fennessy
Fire Chief

IN THIS ISSUE

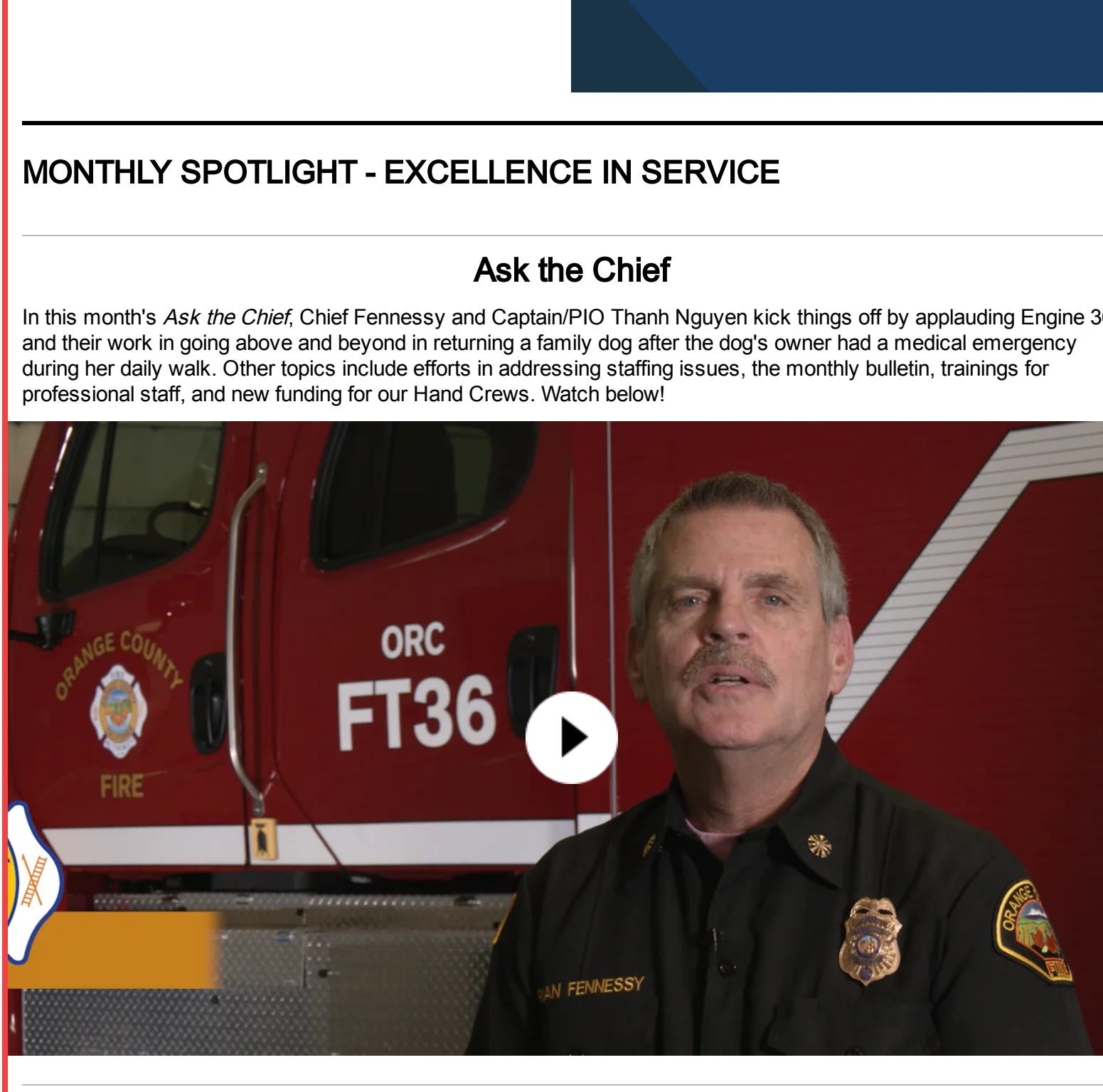
- Monthly Spotlight - Excellence in Service
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Updates
- OCFA Social Media
- Retirements



MONTHLY SPOTLIGHT - EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

Ask the Chief

In this month's Ask the Chief, Chief Fennessy and Captain/PIO Thanh Nguyen kick things off by applauding Engine 36 and their work in going above and beyond in returning a family dog after the dog's owner had a medical emergency during her daily walk. Other topics include efforts in addressing staffing issues, the monthly bulletin, trainings for professional staff, and new funding for our Hand Crews. Watch below!

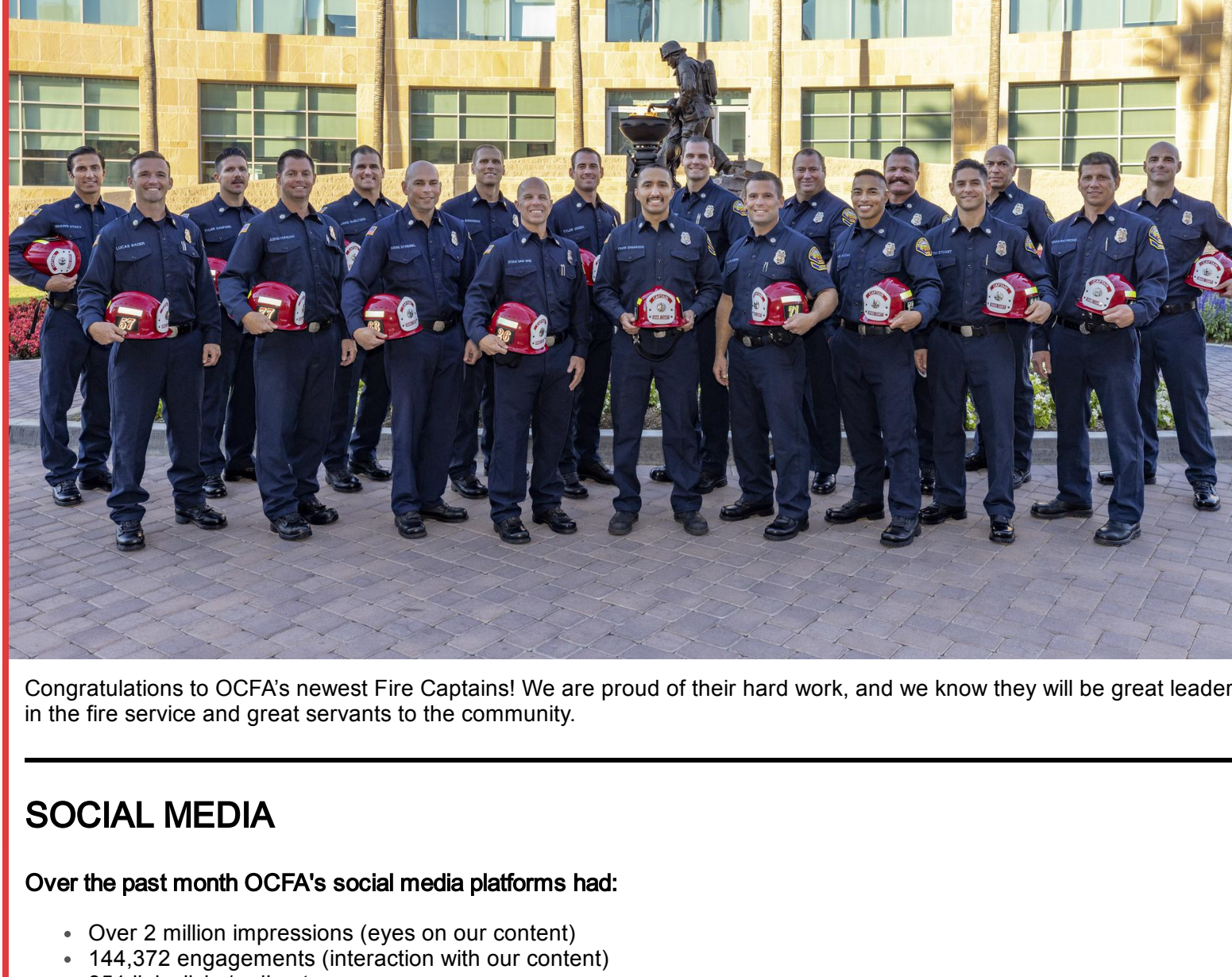


Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



Throughout Hispanic Heritage Month, we celebrated members of our department and their outstanding work in our communities. A recent highlight was of Community Education Specialist Carmen Cardenas. Carmen currently serves the cities of Buena Park, Cypress, La Habra, Santa Ana and Stanton. Thank you, Carmen, for all you do!

Fire Captain Promotions



Congratulations to OCFA's newest Fire Captains! We are proud of their hard work, and we know they will be great leaders in their service to our great citizens and the community.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Over the past month OCFA's social media platforms had:

- Over 2 million impressions (eyes on our content)
- 144,372 engagements (interaction with our content)
- 851 link clicks/redirects
- 1,269 new followers

Despite that success, we are always looking to improve and share information of interest with each other and the communities we serve. To that end, and per Chief Fennessy's June 20, 2022 memo, there is now a new area on the HIVE for OCFA personnel (agency and non-agency) to submit photos, videos, and story ideas for OCFA's social media accounts and other information-sharing platforms.

[Click to Submit Photos/Videos](#)

[Click to Read the Memo](#)



Top Social Media Posts

Tustin and Garden Grove Assist in Laguna Beach



On the same day and time OCFA crews from Tustin and Garden Grove simultaneously fought a house fire and rescued a man whose car was teetering over the edge of an embankment.

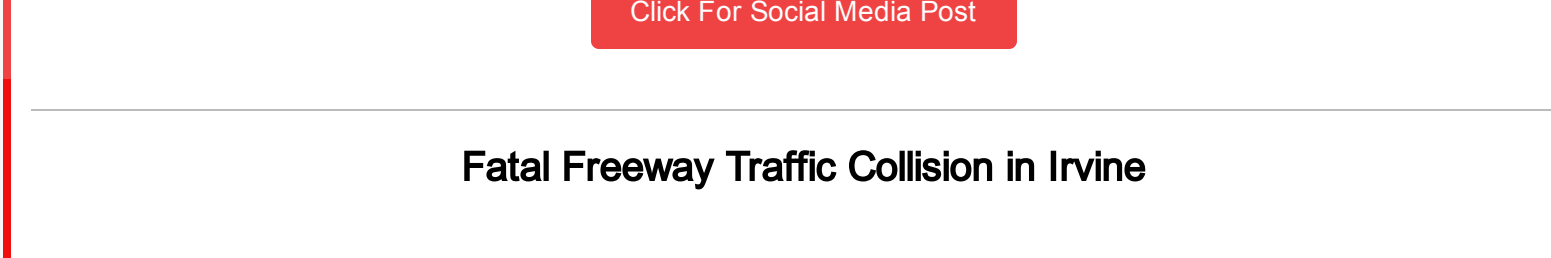
Firefighters arrived on scene in Garden Grove to find a home heavily involved with fire and beginning to catch the neighboring home on fire. Crews quickly knocked down the blaze, saving the adjacent home.

At the same time, firefighters in Tustin quickly stabilized a vehicle that was dangerously close to falling down a steep embankment, and then extracted the driver who was injured. The car came to rest about 40 feet above a home that was directly below.

No matter the call, we are here for our communities!

[Click For Social Media Post](#)

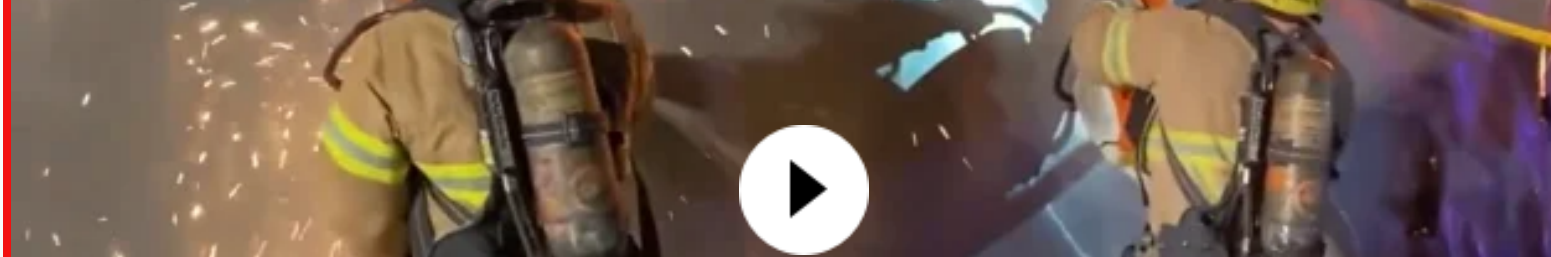
Fatal Freeway Traffic Collision in Irvine



Early morning on September 24th, OCFA firefighters were called to the 5 South at Jambores for an accident involving two cars and an overturned semi-truck that was on fire. Sadly, one individual was pronounced deceased and two others were taken to the hospital in stable condition.

[Click For Social Media Post](#)

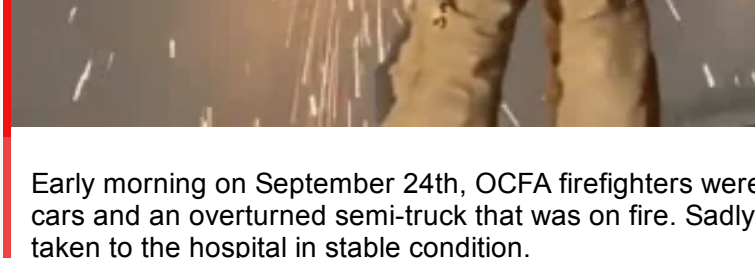
Heavy Rescue 6 and Technical Rescue Truck 9 Assist in Laguna Beach



On September 23rd, our partners at Laguna Beach Fire requested assistance from our Heavy Rescue 6 and technical rescue truck 9 to help stabilize a concrete truck that was teetering above homes. Crews stabilized the truck so that a heavy wrecker tow truck could safely remove the truck. Our technical rescue team members are constantly training for scenarios just like this. Fortunately, no one was injured and property damage was minimal.

[Click For Social Media Post](#)

Firefighter Friday Highlight - Katya O'Neill



Why was August 8th such a big day for firefighter Katya O'Neill? Find out here with Firefighter Friday.

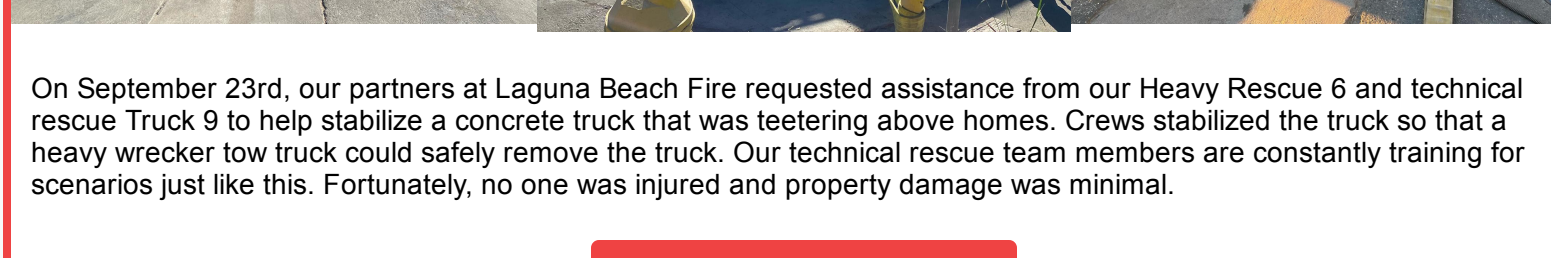
Born in Donetsk, Ukraine, Katya has been in the USA for 17 years. Currently serving Rancho Mission Viejo at station 56, she lives in San Clemente and started in the fire service as an OCFA Reserve Firefighter in San Juan Capistrano.

There for others even before becoming a firefighter, Katya pulled over to help a construction worker who was pinned between two cars and bleeding heavily. She created field tourniquets out of reflective vests and metal rods to #strongbilled. The patient's family asked her to visit at the hospital and gave her an angels wings necklace. This couple later had a baby and named her... Katya. She loves making days better for others, keeping fit, and having a fire family while most of her own family remains in Ukraine.

She reflects about a fire station heavy sack fitness routine involving 20 pushups when it dropped and obstacles to make it harder so they would do more pushups. "All pushups and laughing," she says. She also enjoys beach volleyball, surfing, free diving, and metal detecting.

What does an amazing woman like this share with others? "No matter what, don't give up. The tough times are there to build you as a person, learn from them. Have courage and be kind. Also, a smile goes a long way."

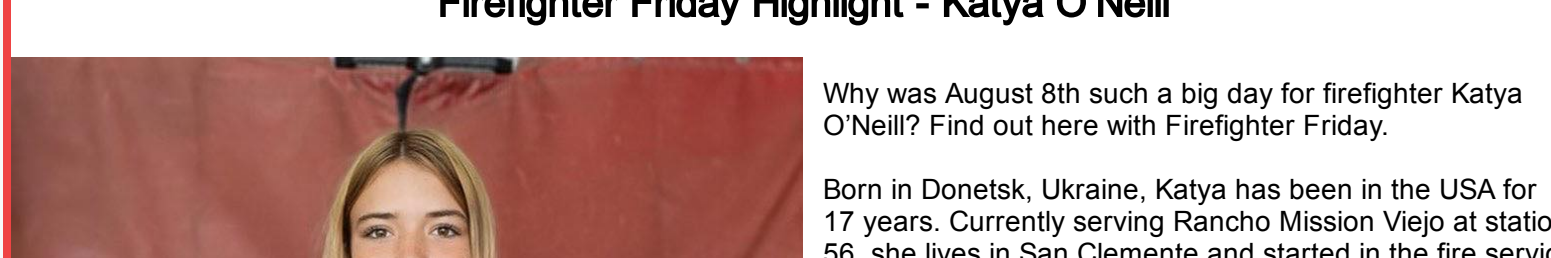
Katya officially completed probation and received her helmet shield on August 8th! Katya, we look forward to serving by your side for many years to come.



[Click For Social Media Post](#)

Observances and Campaigns

Fire Prevention Week

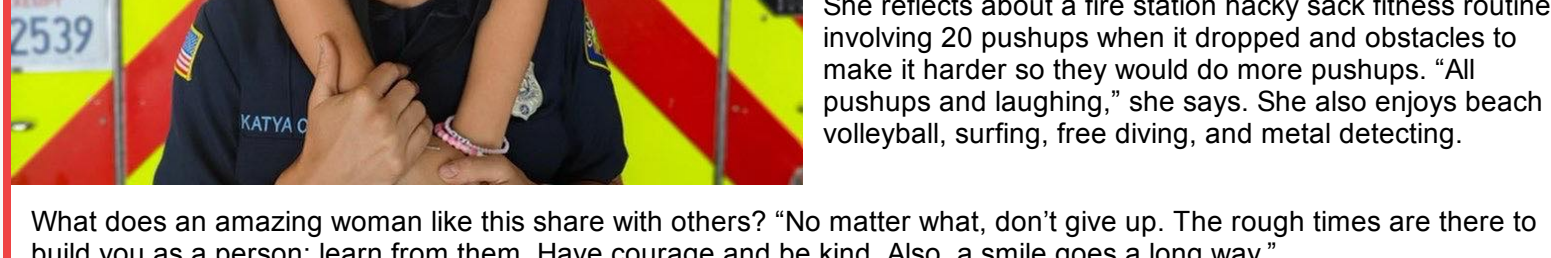


Fire Prevention Week is observed each year during the week of October 9th in commemoration of the Great Chicago Fire, which began on October 8, 1871, and caused devastating damage. This horrific conflagration killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,600 structures, and burned more than 2,000 acres of land.

This was the 100th anniversary of Fire Prevention Week and this year's theme is, "Fire Worth Wait. Plan Your Escape." OCFA created a Fire Prevention campaign that we shared with our partner cities to help spread the word. The campaign included talking points, a fact sheet, and fun, educational kids activities.

[Visit the Campaign Website](#)

Fire Prevention Week Station Open Houses



A few weekends ago, we closed Fire Prevention Week with fire station open houses across Orange County. We also were able to kick-off the Spark of Love Holiday Toy Drive with your generous donations of new and unwrapped toys throughout the morning!

[Click to Read the Article](#)

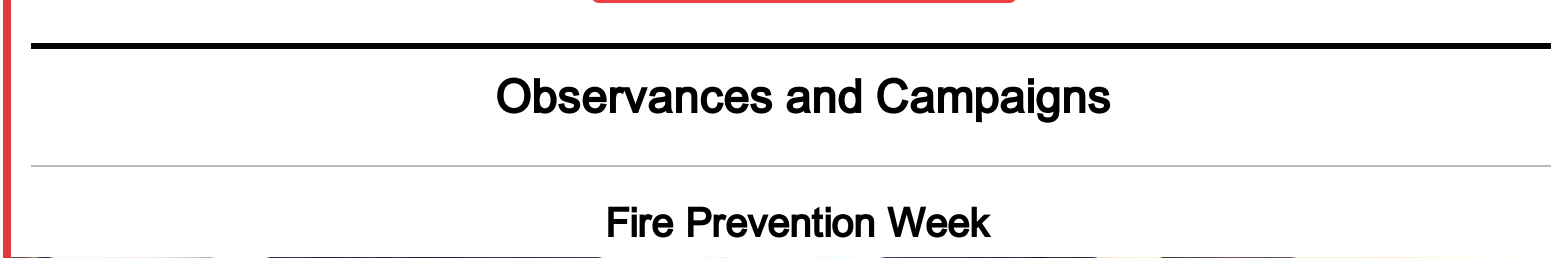
Pass-Along Podcast



From the Orange County Fire Authority, we're reintroducing the Pass-Along Podcast! We address firefighter issues from top to bottom. On the newest episode of the Pass-Along Podcast, Deputy Chief Kenny Dossey sits down with our new Hand Crew Supervisor Brandon Davis and Scott Gorman to talk about the future of our Hand Crew Program. After their discussion, Chief Dossey answers some questions from the field.

[Listen Now!](#)

OCFA Health and Lifestyle Expo



Earlier this month, the Orange County Fire Authority hosted a Health and Lifestyle expo! And now, the OCFA has once again partnered with Longevity to provide direct access to preventive healthcare screenings. We are excited to offer the best access to regular and limited-term professional staff and their immediate family members!

Optional "Lunch and Learn":
Monday, October 31, 2022 at 12:00pm

[Register Here](#)

Orange County Fire Authority in the News

Orange County gets more firefighters, will build new facility near Trabuco Canyon with \$17 million in state cash



State Sen. Dave Min presented Orange County Fire Authority Chief Brian Fennessy with a check for \$16.95 million in state funds, kickstarting the construction of new equipment and a facility to house a recently expanded hand crew team. (Courtesy of the Orange County Fire Authority)

[Click to Read the Article](#)

Boy On Bike Hit With Truck, Suffers Serious Injuries in Coto De Caza
Patch.com - Sep 16, 2022

InVie police using drones to send out alerts, including missing person announcements
MSN.com - Sep 6, 2022

Law Enforcement, Fire Agencies Test Readiness For Terrorist Attack In OC
Patch.com - Sep 7, 2022

Local News | How Orange County is remembering the tragedy of...
The Orange County Register - Sep 10, 2022

LA, Cities Across Southern To Commemorate 21st Anniversary Of 9/11
Patch.com - Sep 10, 2022

Firefighters injured in large apartment complex fire in Newport Beach
KTLA-TV - Sep 11, 2022

Orange County Fire Authority honors lives lost during 9/11 attacks
Yahoo! News - Sep 11, 2022

Tropical Storm Kaye Cleanup Efforts Continue
Calixco Chronicle - Sep 12, 2022

8-Car Crash Injures 5 in Mission Viejo, Sheriff Investigates
Patch.com - Sep 12, 2022

After mudslides, firefighters hunt for missing person in San Bernardino Mountains
The Mercury News - Sep 14, 2022

College students, OC United Vets team up to prep for disasters
Patch.com - Sep 15, 2022

OC Fire Chief Wins Prestigious Award in Orange County
MSN.com - Sep 15, 2022

Hazmat crews called to Buena Park after man's body found in car
KTLA-TV - Sep 17, 2022

Firefighters save apartment complex in Lake Forest, OCFA
KTLA-TV - Sep 17, 2022

Hazmat crews called to Buena Park after man's body found in car
MSN.com - Sep 17, 2022

Local first responders head to Puerto Rico to assist with cleanup efforts
Yahoo! News - Sep 20, 2022

Attorney Pleads Guilty to Setting OC Home On Fire, DUI Driving
Patch.com - Sep 21, 2022

1 dead, 2 hospitalized in multi-car Irvine crash
KTLA-TV - Sep 24, 2022

Authorities ID man killed in fiery multi-vehicle freeway crash in Irvine
MSN.com - Sep 24, 2022

One killed, two injured in fiery multi-vehicle crash in Irvine
KTU-TV - Sep 24, 2022

1 Killed, 2 Injured in Fiery OC Crash
Patch.com - Sep 24, 2022

Child taken to hospital after car crashes into Garden Grove building
KTU-TV - Sep 26, 2022

Garage Fire Displaces 7 Adults, 2 Children in Westminster
Patch.com - Sep 26, 2022

Local News | OC law enforcement, firefighters train in old...
The Orange County Register - Sep 28, 2022

Los Al Chamber honors 2022 service "heroes"
Event-News Enterprise - Sep 30, 2022

Division Chief Roberts' Retirement



We thank Division Chief Ron Roberts for his 42 years of fire service as he retires this month. Chief Roberts began his career as a Reserve Firefighter for Santa Ana Fire Department in 1980 before becoming a firefighter for the City of Westminster in 1981. In 1995, the City of Westminster joined the OCFA as the 19th member city, and he continued to proudly serve Orange County.

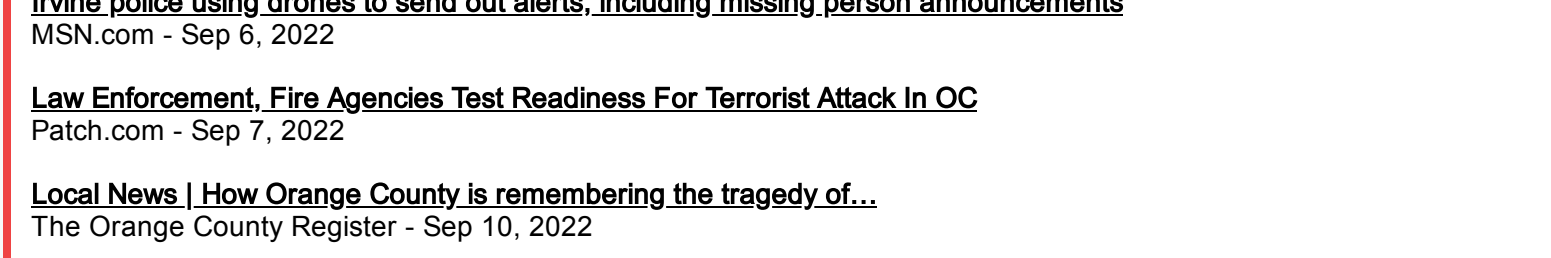
Chief Roberts has held a variety of specialty positions including paramedic, fire investigator, helicopter crew chief, assistant fire training officer, division administrative captain, emergency command center battalion chief, and chief investigator. Chief Roberts retires from Division 1, which serves Los Alamitos, Los Alamitos Joint Forces Training Base, Midway City, Rosemead, Westminster, and Garden Grove.

Chief Roberts has served on multiple incident management teams, including in positions such as Incident Commander for our Covid response and Incident Commander for the Bona Fire. One of his most impactful memories was being at the 2001 Darby Fire in Northern California when the news of the 9/11 attacks arrived during their morning briefing. He remembers the morning briefing pausing for several minutes before they continued on with their firefighting mission while still processing what had occurred.

Living in the City of Orange with his wife, Chief Roberts has two grown sons and three grandchildren they enjoy spending. He plans to complete some of his 30 year's worth of home improvement projects and travel. As he serves his last day at the OCFA, Chief Roberts shares with his OCFA fire family, "I will miss you all, you are good people doing great work. Take care of one another."

September Retirements

- Jerry Breneman, Fire Captain
- John Gray, Fire Captain



Years of Service

Tina Perija, Management Assistant

