

FIRE CHIEF'S MESSAGE

JULY 2021

Every year, we take a moment to pause and recognize the heroism and hard work of our fellow team members and the community's Good Samaritans.

With the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic behind us, we are now able to host the Valor Awards again through the generosity of the LA County Fire Department Foundation and its sponsors.

The 2021 Valor Awards will be hosted virtually on the Foundation's website (www.SupportLACountyFire.org/Valor) on Thursday, July 22, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.



The 2019 Valor Awards held at the Pasadena Convention Center.

This ceremony will recognize two years' worth of achievements from honorees who would have been recipients last year and this year.

The Valor Awards is one of my favorite annual events because it is our opportunity to applaud the everyday courage and quiet commitment that seem to go unnoticed – but are not.

Once again, Emmy Award-winning ABC7 News Anchor Marc Brown will serve as the master of ceremonies and introduce all of the evening's awardees in the following categories: Special Recognition, Exemplary Service Award (*EMS, Teamwork, Integrity, Courage, Community, Commitment, and Caring*), Letter of Commendation, Certificate of Merit, Unit Citation, Certificate of Valor, and, finally, the Medal of Valor.

As the highest honor of all, recipients of the Medal of Valor also tend to be the most humble and selfless.

This year, we have the privilege of bestowing four Medals of Valor to individuals who were involved in three different life-saving incidents:

CLIFF SAVE: In 2019, Fire Fighters Jennifer Teer and Katherine Whitby (pictured below) used every ounce of skill and courage to save someone's life as they clung onto the edge of a cliff.

SWIFTWATER RESCUE: In 2019, Fire Fighter Henry Diaz (pictured below) exemplified bravery and true professionalism to ensure no one got left behind during a dangerous operation.



Congratulations
MEDAL OF VALOR
honorees!

Fire Fighter Katherine Whitby (pictured left)
 Fire Fighter Henry Diaz (pictured right)
 Fire Fighter Jennifer Teer (not pictured)
 Fire Fighter Jeffrey Darney (not pictured)

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TRAPPED COUPLE: In 2020, Fire Fighter Jeffrey Darney raced into a burning home to find and rescue an elderly couple who had been trapped inside.

There are many other extraordinary stories of bravery, selflessness, and dedication to service. I hope you carve some time out of your busy day to watch this year's Valor Awards and take pride in all the amazing accomplishments that you and your team members have collectively contributed to each other and the communities in our care.

Congratulations again to those who will be recognized at this year's event! We thank you for all you do every single day.

LACoFD PROGRAMS RECEIVE NATIONAL RECOGNITION



The F.I.R.E. guide and coloring book can be downloaded from our website: www.fire.lacounty.gov/F-I-R-E.

Few people realize the many groundbreaking, innovative initiatives that our Department has created and implemented over the years, including the robust Air Operations fleet and the critically essential paramedic program.

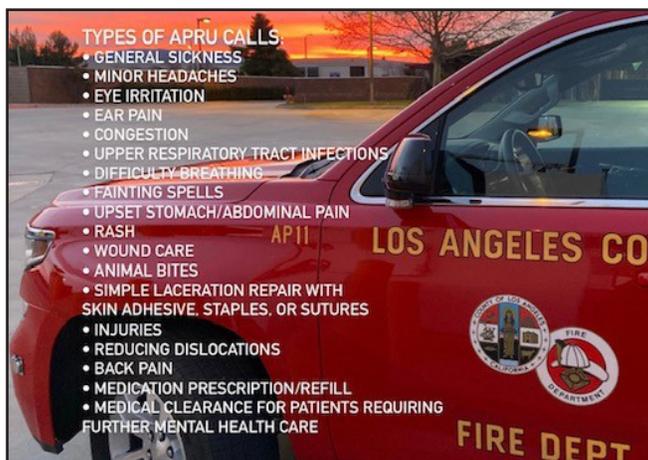
These endeavors may seem rudimentary and ordinary since they are seamlessly integrated into our day-to-day operations. But there is more to it than that; they are fresh approaches on how to improve systems and develop new paths for efficient service and delivery, while decreasing costs and saving lives.

On July 11, the 2021 National Association of Counties (NACo) presented two NACo Achievement Awards to our Department. These prestigious recognitions were awarded to the Advanced Provider Response Unit (APRU) and Family Instructions for Rapid Escape (F.I.R.E.) programs.

Created to augment the Department's paramedic program, the APRU has successfully helped decrease visits and trips to hospital emergency rooms by offering immediate care for a patient's low acuity medical calls, such as general sickness, wound care, and writing prescriptions.

Shown above, the F.I.R.E. program promotes the use of a well-maintained and operational window when escaping from a home fire. The F.I.R.E. guide and coloring book provide useful checklists, safety tips, and detailed information on how to ensure your family and home are as safe as possible.

The APRU and F.I.R.E. programs serve as excellent examples of how creativity and out-of-the-box thinking can develop into and become life-saving initiatives.



Examples of the types of calls APRU team members respond to and receive. Thank you for helping make the program successful!



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The Fire Chief's Message is a monthly communication from the Fire Chief of the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

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