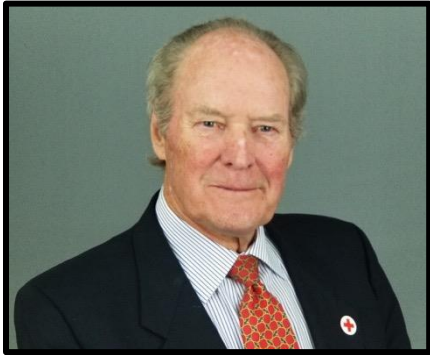


## Red Cross Announces Hero Award for 2019 Colorado Springs Hometown Heroes Dinner

### Phil Long Automotive Group – 2019 Title Sponsor

**Colorado Springs, CO, Monday, February 18, 2019** — Everyday in our community ordinary people perform extraordinary acts of compassion, community service and heroism. The American Red Cross of Southeastern Colorado celebrates those heroes at the annual Colorado Springs Hometown Heroes dinner that will be held at the Broadmoor, Rocky Mountain Ball Room in Colorado Springs on Thursday, March 14, 2019 from 6:00 to 9:00 P.M.

The Colorado Springs Hometown Heroes dinner is an annual fundraiser for the American Red Cross of Southeastern Colorado. Funds from this event are used to support all Red Cross services in southeast Colorado including the Service to Armed Forces, Disaster Relief and the Emergency Preparedness and Health and Safety programs. For more information about this event visit our website at [www.redcross.org/ColoradoSpringsHeroes2019](http://www.redcross.org/ColoradoSpringsHeroes2019).



**Humanitarian Award** - This year the American Red Cross of Southeastern Colorado is recognizing William "Bill" Tutt. Tutt was instrumental in bringing the Airforce Academy and the US Olympic Committee to Colorado Springs. His love for western culture is reflected by his support for the Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo. Colorado Springs is a finer and brighter community because of Tutt's outstanding philanthropic and business leadership in the region for over 40 years.

In addition to recognizing Mr. Tutt, other individual and organizations have been selected for recognition as local heroes. The following have been selected to receive 2019 Hero Awards and will be recognized at

the American Red Cross Colorado Springs Hometown Heroes Dinner:

**Adult Hero – Jerrell Jenkins, Sr.** – Jerrell Jenkins selflessly and fearlessly responded to a free-flowing natural gas break that resulted from the impact of a vehicle crashing into the furnace room of the apartment complex he was managing. He put himself in harm's way when he called for the evacuation of 28 residents then rushed into an area with a high concentration of natural gas to muscle a stuck valve closed and stop the flow of gas. "If I get the call again, I will not waiver in saving others no matter what the cost." Says Jenkins.

**Animal Hero – Go Team Therapy, Crisis and Airport Dogs, Inc.** – Go Team Therapy, Crisis and Airport Dogs, Inc. provides teams of dogs who visit schools, hospitals, nursing homes, libraries, military bases among other locations. They regularly visit USAFA cadets during final exam week. They have been present during local disasters such as wildfires and shootings to help first responders and victims by providing comfort and distraction from tragedy. These dogs and their handlers give back to our community and make a positive impact by offering compassion, care and comfort.

**Community Partner Hero – Shield 616** – Shield 616 equips first responders with necessary, advanced active shooter/crowd control gear. The group also provides personal support to each first responder. Members pray for the individual and his or her family on a daily basis and shower the first responder with care and encouragement throughout the year. All the gear is donated and will be replaced every five years at no cost to the first responder or his department.

**Adult Hero – Josh Rivera, Mike Perkins, Brian Cathey, Isaiah Rivera.** A group of dirt bike riders were out for a fun ride in the backcountry. One of the riders, Eddie Kerr, slammed into a tree. A large branch glanced off his

chest protector and punctured his neck and shoulder, leaving him impaled and dangling from the tree. When Kerr hadn't caught up with the rest of the group they raced back to find him. Upon encountering the rider on the ground, one friend put his gloved hand inside the wound while another supported his badly injured arm. Still another quickly took off on his bike to cover the 10 miles of rough terrain that lay between him and cell service. When he finally arrived, he had the foresight to demand Fight for Life service. Kerr is alive today because of the quick thinking and collaboration of friends. Thanks to Josh Rivera, Mike Perkins, Brian Cathey, Isaiah Rivera.

**First Responder Hero – City of Colorado Springs Police Officer Clay Sunada** - After a high-speed motorcycle accident, Jered Wickman woke up in the middle of the street and discovered that his right foot was touching the back of his head. His left femur was broken in seven places and his right was broken in five. He thought he would be down for a couple months, but it turned out to be whole year. The family was low on resources and his wife and 2 children were in need of support. Officer Clay Sunada became aware of that need while he calmed and quieted wife Victoria in the emergency room immediately after the accident. For Christmas, Sunada made sure the CSPD Santa and Elves visited the Wickman home bringing gifts for the kids and also pitched in for their son's birthday party. The Wickmans feel overwhelmed with gratitude that a peace officer would go so far out of his way to help their family during this time of need.

**Military Hero - USAFA Cadet C1C Kristen Nye** – Cadet Kristen Nye saw a concrete truck overturn while returning to the Air Force Academy. She quickly called 9-1-1, then jumped onto the top of the cab of the truck to remove the debris that was trapping the driver inside the vehicle. Having noted that he had sustained major injuries, she helped others on scene to pry open the door and free the driver. Nye remained at the victim's side until emergency personnel arrived. She then directed traffic safely around the scene of the accident to ensure that there were no secondary victims. By her swift actions, Cadet Nye ensured that first responders were able to quickly stabilize the driver and provide life-saving treatment.

**Military Hero – SSgt. Branden Smithwick, A1C Anthony Bustamante, A1C Matthew Huff** – These brave soldiers rushed to a location on Peterson AFB where a vehicle had rolled thirty feet down an embankment ejecting the driver and pinning her beneath it. With complete disregard for their own safety, and despite the hazards of an overturned vehicle and possible fuel spillage, they scaled a fence to reach the vehicle. They combined forces to lift the three-thousand-pound vehicle off of the victim. Instinctively, they rendered immediate lifesaving first aid and relayed critical information to responding medical personnel. These heroes selflessly risked their own lives in order to rescue a helpless victim.

**Youth Hero – Seven students from Palmer Lake Elementary School** – Seven 6<sup>th</sup> graders at Palmer Lake Elementary School have made the world a friendlier and more accessible place for a fellow student who suffers from Selective Mutism resulting from severe social anxiety. In the spirit of compassion and kindness, and without prompting from school staff, these young ladies have stepped up to help every day. They accompany the new student, at her pace, between classes. They sit with her at lunch. They include her in group projects. Constant and patient peer support has kept a challenged friend on track to complete her 6<sup>th</sup> grade education. Thanks to Tayla Bertrand, MaKayla Coates, Greta Penner, Arianna Ponce, Emery Roher, Kate Ulmer, and Danielle Wilke.