



2023

Inland Empire Heroes Awards

Ontario Convention Center



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Help Prevent Home Fire Deaths and Injuries

This year's Inland Empire 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 Riverside and San Bernardino 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 **16,400 free smoke alarms** and made over **6,000 homes safer** in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.



Nationwide, over **2.5 million free smoke alarms** have been installed and **1,583 lives** have been saved thanks to smoke alarms installed by the Red Cross and partners through the Home Fire Campaign.

Join us for a rewarding day at a *Sound the Alarm* event near you. Make an even greater impact and donate to help families prepare for, respond to and recover from home fires. Visit SoundTheAlarm.org/SoCal to learn more about how you can get involved.



Learn more about the Home Fire Campaign



Please consider donating today. Complete the pledge card, text the word **IEHEROES23** to **76278** or donate online.

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

Registration and Networking

National Anthem: Tina Hargett

Introduction and Welcome

Award Presentations

Animal Welfare Hero Award: Lindi Biggi, *Loving All Animals*

First Responder Hero Award: Specialist Kristina Sanchez and
Specialist Heather Robertson, *Riverside Police Department*

First Responder Hero Award: Deputy Todd Seckrater,
San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department

Gift of Life Hero Award: Donna Piantoni

Good Samaritan Hero Award: Maria Garcia and Allisen Stephens

Service to the Armed Forces Hero Award: Michelle Martinez

Corporate Hero Award: BIGHORN Golf Club Charities

Youth Hero Award: Samantha Moreno, *Thundar, Lightning & Peace*

Closing Remarks

*Thank you to our 2023 Inland Empire Heroes
Selection Committee*

Michelle Gardner | Gabriela Gutierrez | Lashon Halley
Amber Hidalgo | Mike King | Donna Luginbill | Carlvette McIver
Ed Monie | Edward Ornelas | Ivan Sandoval | Richard Segovia
Laura Tolbirt

Event Emcee



Shelby Nelson

Event Emcee

Shelby Nelson is a reporter and multimedia journalist in the Inland Empire. She joined KTLA 5 News in December 2021 and is thrilled to be storytelling in the region she grew up in.

The Covina-native graduated from San Francisco State University with a bachelor's degree in broadcast electronic communication arts. San Francisco is where Shelby kick-started her career. She worked as a writer for KTLA's sister station, KRON 4 News, and later moved on to KPIX 5. After living in the Bay Area for six years, Shelby moved to Palm Springs to become a multimedia journalist and reporter at KESQ-TV.

Shelby has an interest in health, which prompted her to return to school while working in news. She attended City College of San Francisco to achieve a pre-nursing certificate. She is currently working toward a master's in public health to expand upon her passion for health reporting.

After having reported in the Coachella Valley, Shelby went on to become KTLA's first Inland Empire reporter. She interned for the station in 2012 and never could have imagined continuing her dream at Southern California's top news station.

2023 Inland Empire Heroes Honorees



Animal Welfare Hero

Lindi Biggi, *Loving All Animals*

Lindi Biggi is the founder of Loving All Animals, an organization dedicated to bringing together local, regional and national animal welfare organizations to maximize programs intended to stop the killing of animals. Loving All Animals was incorporated at the end of 2008 to fill a void in the animal welfare community within the Coachella Valley. Lindi and her team at Loving All Animals provide vital services for animals within the Coachella Valley, including animal sheltering, adoption, training, support, humane education programs in the community, and more.

Presented by



First Responder Heroes

Specialist Kristina Sanchez and Specialist Heather Robertson, *Riverside Police Department*

In June 2022, Park and Neighborhood Specialists Kristina Sanchez and Heather Robertson were patrolling Fairmount Park in Riverside when they noticed a man hanging from a picnic bench shelter in an apparent suicide attempt. Specialists Sanchez and Robertson requested medical aid and moved the man down to the ground to begin life-saving measures. Thanks to their quick-thinking actions, the man started to breathe just as additional support arrived. He was taken to a local hospital in critical condition, expected to live thanks to the heroic lifesaving efforts of Specialists Sanchez and Robertson.

Presented by





First Responder Hero

Deputy Todd Seckrater, *San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department*

In December 2022, Deputy Todd Seckrater with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department was providing traffic control for the Thoroughbred Holiday Lights event when he was flagged down by a family who had just called 911 because their one-year-old baby had stopped breathing. Deputy Seckrater, a father himself, quickly assessed that the baby had a pulse, but was not breathing. Deputy Seckrater quickly delivered three back blows to the baby's upper back, which cleared the airway, and the baby began to breathe again. The child was transported to a local hospital, where he was treated and later released. The family credits Deputy Seckrater for helping to save their young son's life.

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SAN ANTONIO REGIONAL HOSPITAL



Gift of Life Hero

Donna Piantoni

Donna Piantoni has been donating blood for over three decades. Donna began donating blood in 1988. In 1990, she exclusively began donating platelets, donating blood on her days off. Over the course of 208 visits, Donna has donated 415 units of platelets. A platelet donation can take from 2.5–3 hours a visit, meaning she has approximately spent over 600 hours donating blood with the Red Cross. Donna has experienced many people in her life being diagnosed with cancer and undergoing chemotherapy, so donating platelets is personal to her. Now that she's retired, Donna has her appointments booked for every two weeks to the maximum of 24 times per year. She is also involved with the American Legion Post in Santa Ana, where she has helped organize and recruit others to donate blood.

Presented by



2023 Inland Empire Heroes Honorees



Good Samaritan Heroes

Maria Garcia and Allisen Stephens

Allisen Stephens and her mother Maria Garcia, a San Bernardino City Unified School District employee and mother of three, were volunteering at a first aid station during one of Orange County's toughest trail running races. During their off-road patrol of the trail, they came upon a trail runner who was unconscious, having succumbed to symptoms of heat stroke and rhabdomyolysis. Allisen and Maria jumped into action.

Maria used a ham radio to call first responders to the scene. They moved the runner into the shade and cooled him down with ice and water until first responders arrived. Before the runner was airlifted out, Maria told the helicopter captain that the man may have been suffering from rhabdomyolysis and that he should mention it to the emergency room staff at the hospital. Maria's diagnosis proved to be accurate and shaped how the hospital staff treated and ultimately saved the runner's life without significant or long-term adverse impacts to his health. Thankfully, due to their efforts, it was later learned that the individual survived the life-threatening event. The grateful individual even made contact following his recovery to offer his gratitude to this lifesaving mother-daughter duo.

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Service to the Armed Forces Hero

Michelle Martinez

Michelle Martinez is a crucial partner not just to the American Red Cross Southern California Region, but to all members of the military community. Michelle works as a Certified Peer Support Specialist for the VA Loma Linda Healthcare System as the VISN 22 Lead for the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act. Michelle has organized an extensive roster of community partners — currently numbering over

250 partners — who meet monthly through the Veterans Community Outreach Team (VCOT). This monthly meeting provides members of the community with the opportunity to communicate and learn about each other's organizations and services, while attending to specific needs of local veterans. Michelle knows firsthand the struggles many veterans are going through. Her heart to serve local veterans has taken her to the outermost parts of San Bernardino and Riverside County, through alleys and more — she's even crawled under bridges to reach those who need it most.

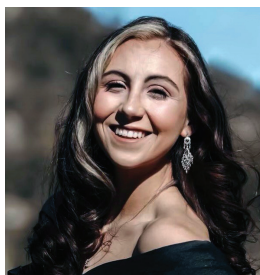
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BIGHORN Corporate Hero

BIGHORN Golf Club Charities

BIGHORN Golf Club Charities supports philanthropic efforts throughout the Coachella Valley area, helping local non-profits and charitable programs in the community. Each year, BIGHORN Golf Club Charities donates thousands of dollars to numerous charities operating in the Coachella Valley. A long-time supporter of the local American Red Cross, BIGHORN Golf Club Charities donates generously each year to support the Red Cross Home Fire Campaign, which aims to reduce home fire deaths and injuries by providing free smoke alarm installations and fire safety information for residents in local communities.

Presented by  **Altura**
CREDIT UNION



Youth Hero

Samantha Moreno, Thundar, Lightning & Peace

Samantha Moreno is a high school senior and the CEO & Founder of Thundar, Lightning & Peace, a nonprofit organization geared towards helping veterans with trauma – including amputees and those experiencing PTSD and depression. Samantha established Thundar, Lightning & Peace at the age of 16 to serve and advocate for veterans who feel they no longer have a

purpose or voice. Samantha enjoys bringing people together through events organized by her nonprofit to support the local military community. Some of Samantha's recently funded projects and events include Blankets for Vets, Medic Bags for Vets and Veterans Day "TopGolf for Vets," as well as frequent visits to Veterans Row to provide veterans with toiletries, blankets, gloves, beanies and more. In December, Samantha co-hosted a Christmas party for homeless veterans and continues to support the local military community and serve those who have served.

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Check out our Impact Report: AlturaCU.com



Sysco | Riverside



Sysco is the global leader in selling, marketing and distributing food products to restaurants, healthcare and educational facilities, lodging establishments and other customers who prepare meals away from home. Our family of products also includes equipment and supplies for the foodservice and hospitality industries. With more than 71,000 associates, Sysco operates 333 distribution facilities worldwide and serves more than 700,000 customer locations.



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American Red Cross Southern California Region | Leadership Team

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

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Ivan Sandoval
Michael Sledd



Thank You!

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**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.

#IEHeroes



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Videos at YouTube.com/SoCalRedCross



Photos from today's event will be shared at Flickr.com/SoCalRedCross

Nominations are accepted year-round at [redcross.org/ieheroes](https://www.redcross.org/ieheroes)