



**American Red Cross**  
Orange County

# 2025 ORANGE COUNTY HEROES AWARDS

**Celebrate the Hero Within!**

Friday, May 2, 2025  
City National Grove of Anaheim

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The 2025 Orange County Heroes Awards videos were produced by Hildreth Media Group, Inc.

We cannot stop crises, but we can make sure people never face them alone.

This year's Orange County Heroes Awards will benefit Red Cross Disaster Relief.

The American Red Cross responds to an emergency every 8 minutes.



From home fires to multi-state natural disasters, the Red Cross goes wherever we're needed, so people can have safe shelter, hot meals, health and mental health services, emergency supplies, recovery assistance and more when they need them most.

From Hurricanes Helene and Milton to the Airport Fire, Line Fire, Bridge Fire, Los Angeles wildfires and countless other crises, the Red Cross has been there for thousands of people across the nation — providing vital relief and tangible help and hope — to ensure no one faces a disaster alone. In Orange County, the Red Cross responds to a wide variety of disasters each year, from devastating home fires affecting a single family to wildfires, flooding and debris flows affecting entire communities. We need your financial support to continue this vital work.

The Red Cross honors donor intent and all donations earmarked for Disaster Relief will be used to help people affected by disasters, big and small. The Red Cross keeps our expenses low and an average of 90 cents of every dollar the Red Cross spends is invested in delivering care and comfort to those in need.



Learn more about how the American Red Cross helps in the event of a disaster.

**\$3** provides a comfort kit with supplies like a toothbrush, comb and shampoo

**\$11** provides a nutritious meal, snack and drink

**\$25** provides a replacement for lost medication or equipment like a cane

**\$50** provides a full day of food and emergency shelter

**\$360** deploys an Emergency Response Vehicle for one day



Please consider donating today. Text the word **OCHEROES25** to **76278** or donate online.



**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

## Registration and Networking

### Presentation of Colors

Recruiting Station Orange Color Guard

### National Anthem

Katrina Pesek

### Introduction and Welcome

### Award Presentations

#### Animal Welfare Hero Award

Jonathan Wood

#### Corporate Hero Award

Automobile Club of Southern California

#### Good Samaritan Hero Award

Jim Tulette and Dilki Tulette

#### Disaster Services Hero Award

Chef Robert Duvall

#### First Responder Hero Award

Chief Brian Fennessy, Orange County Fire Authority

#### Service to the Armed Forces Hero Award

Mission Viejo Marines and Sailors Adoption Committee

#### Gift of Life Hero Award

Mikie Guerrero and the Guerrero Family

#### Youth Hero Award

Rohen Vargo

### Closing Remarks

### Event Co-Chairs

Lance Britt II ▪ David Engwall

Videos from today's event will be shared 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)

## 2025 Orange County Heroes Selection Committee

Jonathan Brenner, Lance Britt II, David Engwall, Dean Felch, Sara Garske, Denise Ibarria, Tara Kasmarek, Wing Lam, Sam Namiranian, Laura Nguyen, Jill Rawlinson-Baker, Denise Tafoya-McNevin, Carol La Vache and John Waldeck



### 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.



# 2025 ORANGE COUNTY HEROES HONOREES



## **Jonathan Wood** *Animal Welfare Hero*

Jonathan Wood is a retired business executive and co-founder of Trinity Counseling Ministries alongside his wife Amanda. In addition to spearheading the ministry's Dog Behaviorism & Animal Assisted Therapy Program, Jonathan is also a registered hospice care volunteer and an AKC-Certified Canine Evaluator and Trainer. At Trinity Counseling, Jonathan assists others in learning "how to speak dog" and guides them in utilizing the newfound relationship with their dog to make a positive impact in their community by volunteering in a nursing facility, school, hospital or the creative location of their choice. In addition to his work with dog behaviorism, Jonathan and Amanda have two miniature horse therapy ponies named Maverick and Jasmine, who bring joy to terminally ill hospice patients. As a philanthropist and advocate for animal welfare, Jonathan's unwavering commitment to therapy animals provides a sanctuary for healing and restoration in the lives of community members in need.

Presented by  **BRASSTECH**



## **Automobile Club of Southern California** *Corporate Hero*

Automobile Club of Southern California (Auto Club) has been a longtime partner of the American Red Cross. In January 2025, the Auto Club supported survivors of the devastating Los Angeles wildfires, with Auto Club employees assembling thousands of hygiene kits to distribute to those displaced by the fires. The Auto Club also committed to donating \$800,000 to the United Way of Greater Los Angeles and \$200,000 to the Red Cross, earmarked for wildfire relief efforts. The Auto Club also previously donated \$75,000 to support Red Cross relief efforts after the devastating Hawaii wildfires. The Auto Club helps support the community by hosting Red Cross blood drives at their Costa Mesa Administrative Offices, which have collected over 293 units of blood since 2022 to help patients in need. Additionally, the Auto Club also ensures its employees are prepared to help during emergencies, utilizing Red Cross Training Services programs to train over 100 of their employees in First Aid/CPR/AED.

Presented by  **PACIFIC LIFE** |  **PACIFIC LIFE FOUNDATION**



## **Jim Tulette and Dilki Tulette** *Good Samaritan Hero*

A quick trip to Target turned into a health emergency for Lenny La Vache. While shopping, he suddenly fell to the floor and hit his head, resulting in extensive head trauma and bleeding. In the aisle next to him was retired Fire Department Captain Jim Tulette and his wife Dilki. Jim immediately checked for a pulse and breathing and started lifesaving measures, using towels to help with the head injury bleeding and performing CPR. Dilki called 911, providing valuable information to the dispatcher about Lenny's fall and head injury, and informing them that CPR was in progress. She then waited outside to help direct first responders to Lenny's location, saving critical time. Jim, and later first responders, provided a total of 23 minutes of continuous lifesaving CPR and two AED shocks before Lenny's heartbeat returned. In the following days, Lenny received extensive medical care. "There is no way Lenny should be alive today. Doctors gave him a 6% chance of survival under those circumstances," says his wife, Carol. Today, Lenny is healthy and happy due to Jim and Dilki's heroic and lifesaving actions.

Presented by **UCI Health**



## **Chef Robert Duvall** *Disaster Services Hero*

As he saw the devastating wildfires sweeping through Los Angeles, Orange County-based chef Robert Duvall immediately wanted to help. He thought of the leftover food in his freezer from holiday catering events and decided he could use it to feed at least 100 people. Chef Robert took to social media to recruit others to help and quickly garnered the support of 14 fellow Orange County chefs who committed to making meals for fire survivors and first responders. Chef Robert's goal was to deliver 10,000 meals within the first six weeks, and thanks to his efforts and the support of other local chefs, this goal was surpassed. Chef Robert delivered thousands of meals to Red Cross shelters and other locations during the wildfires, helping countless people impacted by the fires, as well as supporting first responders. In addition to his wildfire relief efforts, Chef Robert is dedicated to improving school lunches by advocating for healthier, balanced meals and reducing processed food in local schools. He is also launching his own non-profit, Duvall's Community Kitchen, to feed families in need in Orange County.

Presented by  **ANTIS 35 YEARS**  
KEEPING FAMILIES SAFE & DRY!



**Chief Brian Fennessy, Orange County Fire Authority**  
*First Responder Hero*

Although Orange County Fire Authority Chief Brian Fennessy has seen many fires, the Eaton Fire in Los Angeles was deeply personal. In January, the Eaton Fire was sweeping through Altadena, the community where Chief Fennessy grew up, and where his brother Dave still lived. He was initially unable to contact Dave, and fearing the worst, he drove from Orange County to Altadena. Fortunately, he learned that Dave and his family were able to evacuate. When Chief Fennessy got to his brother's neighborhood, miraculously, the only homes still standing on the street were that of his brother and a neighbor. Knowing that fires can quickly spread, and no fire crews were available to protect the remaining two homes, he went back to his car, gathered some tools and went to work. With the help of a friend, they tore down wooden fences along with other combustibles. He recognized a hot spot in the neighbor's house around the gas meter, which if ignited, would certainly mean the destruction of both homes. Without any water, he improvised quickly by forcing into the home and found a small number of liquids in the refrigerator. He doused the hot spot with these liquids to cool down the gas meter as much as possible. Due to Chief Fennessy's quick-thinking, he was able to save his brother's home and the home of his neighbor.

Presented by 



**Mission Viejo Marines and Sailors Adoption Committee**  
*Service to the Armed Forces Hero*

The Mission Viejo Marines and Sailors Adoption Committee was founded in 2006 by the City of Mission Viejo. The committee is dedicated to supporting the Marines and Sailors of Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton. Committee volunteers support year-round initiatives including sending care packages to deployed troops, providing emergency assistance to servicemembers, collecting toys for the children of servicemembers and facilitating the "Holiday Adopt a Marine Family Gift-Giving Program," distributing grocery store gift cards to Marines during Thanksgiving, honoring outstanding Marines at City Council meetings, raising approximately \$50,000 annually through fundraising events like the "Tee it Up for Marines" golf tournament and more — significantly impacting the lives of those they serve at Headquarters Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division.

Presented by 



**Mikie Guerrero and the Guerrero Family** *Gift of Life Hero*

In 2020, Mikie Guerrero endured a life-altering car accident that left him in a coma for 27 days. His survival was nothing short of miraculous, made possible through the generous blood donations that sustained him. Within the first 24 hours of emergency care, Mikie received 32 units of whole blood and 14 units of platelets at Orange

Global Medical Center. Over the course of his treatment, Mikie received a total of 64 units, highlighting the critical importance of maintaining a stable blood supply for hospital patients. Grateful for the generosity of blood donors who saved his life, Mikie and his family have taken action to ensure other patients receive the same opportunity. They have successfully organized annual blood drives, engaging family, friends, and local supporters. Since 2023, Mikie's blood drives have welcomed 52 first-time blood donors and collected 171 units of blood, further contributing to the community's blood supply and potentially saving countless lives.

Presented by 



**Rohen Vargo** *Youth Hero*

San Clemente teenager Rohen Vargo's grandfather has Parkinson's Disease, and Rohen grew up taking his blood pressure. As part of his high school studies, Rohen learned about healthcare disparities in different areas of Orange County. Knowing that access to basic home blood pressure monitoring could be lifesaving for people unable to regularly see a physician, Rohen started a program called Health in Your Hands. Using a \$3,250 grant with his high school, he initiated a student-run blood pressure screening clinic, where he distributed free blood pressure cuffs and provided educational pamphlets. Health in Your Hands not only screened for hypertension but also provided a way for individuals to be proactive about their health. Thanks to Rohen's dedication, Health in Your Hands has provided blood pressure screening for over 89 adults and cuffs to 416 individuals total.

Presented by 

## Congratulations, 2025 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

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[facebook.com/SoCalRedCross](https://facebook.com/SoCalRedCross)

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

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

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



## THANK YOU...

to all the Red Cross Heroes making an impact in our community!

### SAVE A LIFE. DONATE BLOOD AT ANTIS!

Scan here to see our upcoming drives!



*a little help*  
FOUNDATION  
est. 2014

the  
**CARING**  
PATH

# CONGRATULATIONS

TO ALL THE  
ORANGE COUNTY HEROES!

Brasstech proudly congratulates Jonathan Wood on his well-deserved recognition as an Animal Welfare Hero honoree.

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Powered by UC Irvine.

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### The beauty of community in action

U.S. Bank is proud to support  
the 2025 Orange County  
Heroes Awards.

[usbank.com/communitypossible](http://usbank.com/communitypossible)



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## NOMINATE A HERO

**Orange County Heroes Awards  
nominations are accepted year-round.**

Please visit [redcross.org/ocheroes](http://redcross.org/ocheroes) to learn more  
or to nominate a hero to be recognized!

## REGIONAL LEADERSHIP

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Chief Operating Officer

**Glenn Maddalon**  
Regional Chief Development Officer

**Debbie Leahy**  
Regional Disaster Program Officer

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# 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.