



24TH ANNUAL

★ ★ ★ REAL HEROES AWARDS ★ ★ ★

Ordinary People. Extraordinary Courage.

Friday, October 2, 2026

USS Midway Museum

American Red Cross
San Diego and Imperial Counties

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Mr. and Mrs. Neil B. Mahoney

and Dr. Dave Zettel

The 2026 Real 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 Real Heroes Awards will benefit Red Cross Disaster Relief.
The American Red Cross responds to an emergency every 8 minutes.**

Our purpose is to meet the immediate disaster-caused needs of individuals, families, and communities.

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.

The Red Cross responds to disasters down the street, across the country and around the world. From flooding in Texas and Indiana to wildfires in Oregon, Washington, Nevada and California, our Red Cross workers are there to provide tangible help and hope when it's needed most. In San Diego and Imperial Counties, the Red Cross responds to hundreds of disasters each year, from devastating home fires affecting a single family to wildfires and flooding 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. We're committed to being the very best stewards of our donors' dollar. The Red Cross keeps our expenses low and an average of **91 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.**



**Please consider donating today.
Text the word SDHEROES26
to 76278 or donate online.**

When you donate to the American Red Cross, your donation is used efficiently. An average of **91 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

Falck San Diego Honor Guard

National Anthem

Machinery Technician Petty Officer First Class Michael Dalager

Introduction and Welcome

Award Presentations

Animal Welfare Hero Award

Michelle Cohn

Corporate Hero Award

Hunter Industries

Disaster Services Hero Award

San Diego Gas & Electric's Fire Safety Goats

Good Samaritan Hero Award

Amorous Blackman

Service to the Armed Forces Hero Award

Selah Marting

Youth Hero Award

Nicole Hank

First Responder Hero Award

Deputy José Almaraz Macias

Gift of Life Hero Award

San Diego State University

Closing Remarks

Event Chair

Tina Abdelnour

2026 Real Heroes Awards Selection Committee

Committee Chair: Tina Abdelnour

Dana Maze, *American Red Cross*

Enrique Meza, *U.S. Bank*

Chief Anthony O'Boyle, *Sycuan Casino Resort*

Courtney Pendleton, *Mission Fed Credit Union*



MONICA DEAN

Event Emcee

Monica Dean is a National Edward R. Murrow Award-winning anchor/reporter for NBC 7 San Diego. She co-anchors NBC 7's 4 & 5 p.m. weekday newscasts and develops content for NBC's streaming platforms.

Monica is a career storyteller and truth seeker.

In her nearly two decades at NBC 7 San Diego, she has won multiple Emmy Awards for her coverage. Monica led a year-long investigation for an NBC 7 documentary series titled, "STOLEN," focusing on the sex trafficking of children in San Diego and beyond. Monica and her team were honored with NBC 7's first ever National Edward R. Murrow Award, along with a Golden Mike Award, three regional Murrow Awards and five Emmy Awards for their work on the trafficking docuseries.

Monica is passionate about faith, family and community. She is married and has three school-age children, all of whom are active in their community church. Monica regularly emcees events for a list of non-profit organizations including several that support children, women, sex trafficking survivors, and emergency preparedness/response. Monica also enjoys serving the community through regular volunteerism and motivational speaking.

Follow Monica



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★ 2026 REAL HEROES HONOREES ★



ANIMAL WELFARE HERO

Michelle Cohn

Michelle Cohn has devoted more than a decade to improving the lives of animals and people through her work with the San Diego Humane Society. With over 25,000 volunteer hours and more than 400 foster animals cared for, she has helped save hundreds of vulnerable animals while inspiring others to foster, adopt and volunteer.

Her innovative outreach efforts, including therapy puppy visits for first responders, have strengthened both animal welfare and community well-being.

Presented by  **KAISER
PERMANENTE**

Hunter[®] **CORPORATE HERO** **Hunter Industries**

For more than four decades, Hunter Industries has demonstrated that business success and social responsibility can go hand in hand. Guided by two of its core values, Family and Social Responsibility, the San Marcos-based, family-owned company invests in the communities where its employees live and work through charitable giving, volunteerism, product donations, and nonprofit partnerships. Hunter also integrates sustainability into its products and operations, developing solutions that conserve water and energy while working to reduce waste and environmental impact. Through its Community Impact Grant program and employee-led initiatives, Hunter has consistently supported the American Red Cross with both sustaining and disaster relief funding, helping to create stronger, more resilient communities.

Presented by  **American
Red Cross**

★ 2026 REAL HEROES HONOREES ★



DISASTER SERVICES HERO

San Diego Gas & Electric's Fire Safety Goats

San Diego Gas & Electric's Fire Safety Goats have become a unique and effective force in wildfire prevention throughout San Diego County. Since 2021, these goats have helped reduce fire risk by clearing dry vegetation in difficult terrain — creating

natural fire breaks and protecting communities, infrastructure and natural habitats. Their work also promotes environmental sustainability while engaging residents in wildfire preparedness and safety education.

Presented by



**American
Red Cross**



GOOD SAMARITAN HERO

Amorous Blackman

Amorous Blackman demonstrated remarkable bravery when she stopped to assist at a serious freeway crash and rescued a man from a burning vehicle. Despite the danger to herself, she provided first aid, comforted the injured victim and remained on scene until emergency responders arrived. Her selfless actions and quick thinking helped save a life and serve as an inspiring example of compassion in action.

Presented by



★ 2026 REAL HEROES HONOREES ★



SERVICE TO THE ARMED FORCES HERO

Selah Marting

For the past ten years, Selah Marting has dedicated her career to supporting veterans and active-duty service members through Paws for Purple Hearts. As Senior Program Instructor, she has led canine-assisted therapy programs that help military personnel navigate challenges such as PTSD, traumatic brain injuries and mobility

limitations while fostering healing, confidence and connection. Through her leadership in therapy, outreach and service dog training, Selah has positively impacted thousands of warriors and their families, making a lasting difference in the military community.

Presented by 



YOUTH HERO

Nicole Hank

At just 18 years old, Nicole Hank demonstrated extraordinary courage and compassion when she intervened to prevent a woman from committing suicide on the side of the road. Nicole safely restrained the woman, calmed her during a mental health crisis and stayed by her side until police arrived. Her quick actions, empathy, and determination helped protect a life when it was needed most.

Presented by 

★ 2026 REAL HEROES HONOREES ★



FIRST RESPONDER HERO

Deputy José Almaraz Macias

San Diego County Sheriff's Office Deputy José Almaraz Macias displayed extraordinary courage and professionalism when he encountered a stabbing victim suffering from life-threatening injuries. He quickly applied a tourniquet and provided lifesaving care while managing a dangerous scene until medical personnel arrived.

His heroic actions are credited with saving the victim's life. He later assisted in the successful apprehension of the suspect, exemplifying true dedication to public safety.

Presented by  **FALCK**

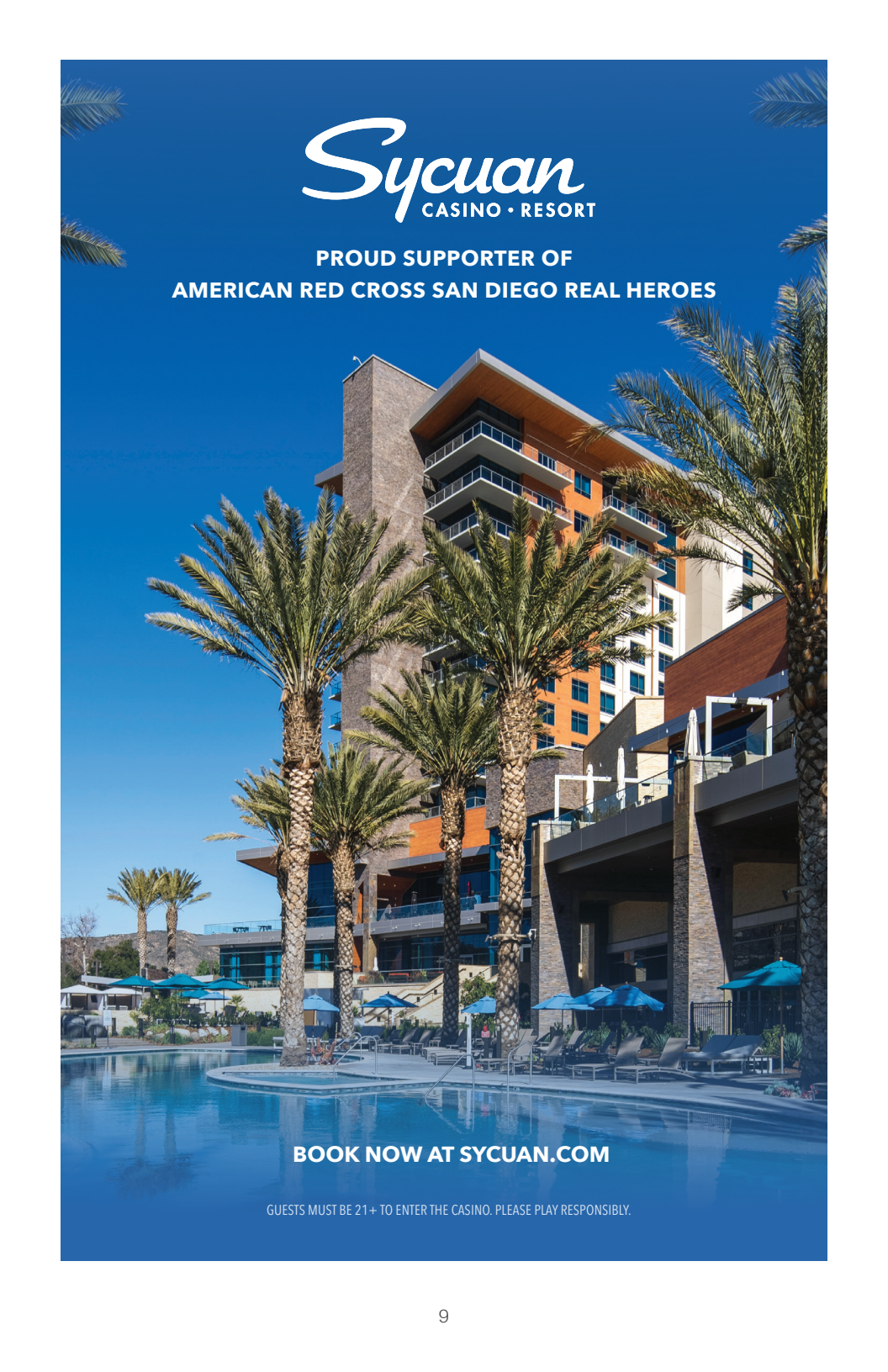


GIFT OF LIFE HERO

San Diego State University

San Diego State University (SDSU) has spent nearly a decade partnering with the American Red Cross through its annual Aztecs for Life Blood Drive, which has become California's largest one-day collegiate blood drive. Since its inception, the drive has collected over 2,700 units of blood, helping thousands of patients in need of lifesaving transfusions. Through strong campus-wide participation and outreach, SDSU has fostered a lasting culture of service and generosity.

Presented by  **Sycuan**
CASINO • RESORT

A full-page advertisement for Sycuan Casino Resort. The background is a photograph of the resort's modern architecture, featuring a multi-story building with orange and grey tones, surrounded by several tall palm trees. In the foreground, there is a swimming pool with lounge chairs and blue umbrellas. The sky is clear blue.

Sycuan

CASINO • RESORT

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AMERICAN RED CROSS SAN DIEGO REAL HEROES**

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Congratulations to today's honorees.

Each of you is a true **community hero**.



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Proud to support the American Red Cross Southern California Region.



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Working hand-in-hand with local partners **to build strength in our community.**

At Amazon, we look to leverage our scale for good to help strengthen local communities. That means combining our strengths with those of community partners, working together to find creative solutions that have a lasting impact. Thank you to the **American Red Cross of San Diego and Imperial Counties** for your impact in the community.

To learn more, visit aboutamazon.com



The power of collective caring is an amazing thing.

Kaiser Permanente is a proud supporter of the American Red Cross.

At Kaiser Permanente, we make it our mission to help build healthy communities, and we couldn't do it alone.

Learn more at kp.org/sandiego.



Mission Fed is a Proud Local Supporter of the American Red Cross and Honors the 2026 Real Heroes



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San Diego City Firefighters Local 145 is honored to support the American Red Cross of San Diego and Imperial Counties and the vital role it plays in serving our local communities.



America's Living Symbol of Freedom

For eight decades the USS MIDWAY has stood as a symbol of American strength, innovation, and service. Now as a museum, Midway continues to honor those who served, educate future generations, and inspire all who come aboard. Experience the history. Explore the stories. Celebrate the legacy.



USS **Midway**
MUSEUM

AMERICA'S LIVING
SYMBOL OF FREEDOM

★ REGIONAL LEADERSHIP ★

American Red Cross Southern California Region Leadership Team

Sean Mahoney, *Regional Chief Executive Officer*
Becky Firey, *Chief Operating Officer*
Glenn Maddalon, *Regional Chief Development Officer*
Debbie Leahy, *Regional Disaster Program Officer*
Daniel Beighley, *Regional Service to the Armed Forces Director*
Christine Welch, *Regional Communications Director*
Debbie Pari, *Regional Volunteer Services Officer*
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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Paula Downey, *(Board Vice Chair)*
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Dan Hom	
Brigadier General David Hyman	

**Emeritus*

★ THANK YOU ★

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#SDICRealHeroes



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Hero videos from today's event will be shared at
YouTube.com/SoCalRedCross

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

**Nominations are accepted year-round
at redcross.org/sandiego/realheroes**



**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.