



*Southern  
Tier Chapter  
Real Heroes  
Breakfast*

Presented By

**Simmons-Rockwell**  
AUTOMOTIVE DEALERSHIPS



**Thursday, May 14, 2026**

**Binghamton, New York**



**American Red Cross**  
Southern Tier Chapter



## Real People, Real Heroes

The Southern Tier Real Heroes Breakfast is a celebration of the everyday heroes in our community who have saved the life of another. These honorees embody the spirit of the American Red Cross through acts of courage, dedication, and unselfish character.

Heroes are independently nominated and recognized for their humanitarian actions within the community.



**American Red Cross**  
Southern Tier Chapter



## **ANIMAL RESCUE AWARD**

**BINGHAMTON FIRE DEPARTMENT:  
REPRESENTED BY LT. MARCO  
MICHITTI, FIREFIGHTER ERIC  
NOVOBILSKI**

*Presented to the owner of a pet who was instrumental in saving a life, or individuals who were instrumental in saving an animal's life.*

In May 2025, Winnie, a beloved golden retriever, went on a spur-of-the-moment adventure in pursuit of some fast-moving geese. In the process, Winnie was swept downstream in the Susquehanna River, becoming stranded on an island. Binghamton Fire Department crew members were notified of the situation and went to work. Unfortunately, after reaching the island by boat, their attempts to safely capture Winnie were unsuccessful. After working with Animal Control, a humane trap was set.

The next day, Lt. Michitti and Firefighter Novobilski launched a boat from the Route 201 Bridge in Johnson City, hoping to find Winnie in the trap or on her own. When they reached the island, they heard sounds in the brush, found Winnie and were able to get her in the rescue boat. No doubt there was a joyous reunion when Winnie was reunited with her family. Winnie was happy, healthy, and vigorously wagging her tail. Her family was thrilled.

Lt. Michitti and Firefighter Novobilski were pleased to assist. "This was nice in the end," commented Lt. Michitti. "The dog couldn't have been happier." Firefighter Novobilski added that it was good to use their training to rescue what he deemed "the sweetest dog."

*Nominated by the Hatala Family*

*Presented by*





## **BLOOD DONOR AWARD**

### **PATRICIA LEACH**

*Presented to an individual that has helped save lives through blood donations or created awareness of the importance of blood donations.*

Patty Leach is a true hero, and earns an A+ for donating her A+ blood for approximately four decades. She began her blood donation tradition in college, attending a blood drive when she and a friend said, "Let's try it." Her dedication has continued.

"Giving blood isn't that hard," explains Patty, and "I think everyone should give back to the community." Patty is also inspired by the fact that she would never want a family member to not get the blood they need at any point. Since she is able, and others may not be due to medications, medical issues or other situations, Patty feels a donation is well worth the one hour time commitment. More than 90 units have been recorded locally, but since Patty's early donations began so long ago, her impact has been larger than what is logged. "It's a concrete thing if you give blood, and you know you're helping someone," said Patty. Her dedication is admirable, and an inspiration to all.

*Nominated by Sarah Seamans, Co-worker*

*Presented by*





## **EDUCATION AWARD**

### **CAIT CAVANAUGH**

*Presented to an individual who used life-saving skills to save the life of another in an educational setting, an educator who used life-saving skills to save the life of another in the community, or an educator who teaches the importance of preparedness or life-saving skills.*

As Assistant Director of Emergency Management at Binghamton University (BU), emergency preparedness and response are Cait Cavanaugh's world. She comments that the office has a "see a need, fill a need" mentality, and that's just what she did.

In many settings, life safety equipment is often invisible, impeding rapid response. Cait changed that paradigm by implementing an emergency station program that makes life-saving equipment visible and accessible. This is particularly important at a large university, where on any given day more than 20,000 people are on campus.

Cait began with 16 stations placed in key locations, based on occupancy. Each station consists of bright walls for visibility; a cabinet with emergency equipment (CPR, mass bleeding/control kit, NARCAN, and an AED); a two-way intercom and cameras that are connected to dispatchers; and a blue light identifier that is linked to Emergency Services. The concept that these stations are accessible and actionable is extremely proactive and progressive, making a difference between life and death. Cait is a true hero for her foresight, initiative and dedication, which strengthens the safety culture of the entire university community and sets the standard for other institutions.

*Nominated by Jessica Lane-Rawbukwisi, Colleague*

***Presented by***

**BAE SYSTEMS**



## **FIRE RESCUE AWARD**

**JOHNSON CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT  
GROUP C: LT. AJ EATON, FIREFIGHTER  
JOSH WILLIAMS, COLIN CORRY, ALEX  
KOCAN, SEAN MEANEY, PHIL PALMER,  
LEIGH TOBIAS, RYAN WILLIS**

*Presented to individuals whose life-saving actions or preparedness saved the life of another from a fire.*

In the early hours of November 18, 2025, the Johnson City Fire Department was dispatched to a house fire with possible entrapment. Arriving on the scene, the crew entered with a hose. Lt. AJ Eaton and Firefighter Alex Kocan were informed that a victim was trapped in a bedroom. They entered the residence, did a primary search, and located the victim in the room where the fire appeared to have started. They attempted to open the door of the bedroom, but the victim was up against the back of the door. Firefighter Josh Williams and Inspector Sean Meaney arrived to assist.

Exiting the house, Firefighter Williams was able to enter the bedroom through a first floor window after pulling out an air conditioner, but had to leave by jumping head first out the window due to rapidly deteriorating fire conditions. Firefighter Kocan and Inspector Meaney were eventually able to remove the bedroom door where the victim was located. Water suppressed the fire and the team dragged the victim to safety, where care was provided by emergency services.

Lt. Eaton said he was pleased to be able to work with the entire crew as a team. Firefighter Williams commented that he and his fellow firefighters train to be prepared, and that they want to “do what they’re supposed to do and do it well.” This group of heroes certainly proved that to be the case during this event.

Nominated by Robert Blakeslee, Fire Marshal

*Presented by*





## **GOOD NEIGHBOR AWARD**

### **JEREMY AUSTIN, JESSE BERGE, ANDRE GRAHAM, JASON MUNDELL**

*Presented to individuals whose life-saving actions or preparedness saved the life of another from a fire.*



On August 28, 2025, National Pipe & Plastics employee Jason Mundell was taking a work break outside when he noticed smoke coming from a neighboring house. He saw flames and called 911. Jeremy Austin saw what was happening from the window of the breakroom and notified fellow employee Andre Graham, the company's environmental health and safety manager. They headed outside to help assess the situation.

Jason and Andre grabbed a garden hose to hold back the flames, and bedrooms were checked as they called out to anyone inside. The family's children had exited through a side door, and the

National Pipe team gathered the family pets and carried them to safety where Jesse Berge, another fellow employee, was standing by to help. The fire department arrived and addressed the fire on the back of the house.

It never crossed Jason's mind to not go into the house to help and said it felt good to assist. Jeremy commented that he was "excited and nervous at the same time," but his basic instinct was to take action. Andre's prior knowledge of emergency response was invaluable, prioritizing people, animals and then property, while Jesse's HR experience assisted on the "people" side of the incident. These employees exemplify real heroes, going above and beyond to help members of their community.

*Nominated by Robert Mack, Town of Union Supervisor*



## **ADULT GOOD SAMARITAN AWARD**

### **DALE CONRAD**

*Presented to an individual who used life-saving skills to save the life of another or had a significant positive impact on the life of another.*

Dale Conrad gives time, energy and effort in various ways throughout his community and has done so for decades. While volunteering at Elmira's Clemens Center on December 13, 2025, Dale's volunteer actions went beyond the call of duty.

After a performance, staff and volunteers were advised that an adult patron with dementia was missing. Dale jumped into action, helping manage a scary situation where time was of the essence. Law enforcement was notified and a missing person alert was issued. In the meantime, Dale began sweeping areas and patrolling the perimeter of the Clemens Center. As time passed, Dale identified that the perimeter may need to expand, hopped in his car, and further checked the surrounding area. Aware of the person's description and attire, Dale was able to identify the lost patron at a distance from the venue and asked if he needed help. The man responded that he went to a show, but couldn't find his wife. Dale's warmth and approachability allowed him to engage in conversation and ultimately got the individual into his vehicle and back to his family. The reunion was full of joy and extreme relief.

"Anybody at the Clemens Center, they're my family," said Dale. "If something is wrong, I will help." Dale could simply have gone home, but his empathy for those involved provided the impetus to continue, averting what could have been a dangerous or even tragic situation. The sign of a true hero, Dale commented that he would do this again in a heartbeat, and believes everyone in the world should be that way. And on another hero note, Dale is also a 20-gallon blood donor

*Nominated by Erik Powell, Volunteer Coordinator*

***Presented by***

**The Clemens Center**



## **YOUTH GOOD SAMARITAN AWARD**

### **ESTELLE ELKIN, EVELYN ELKIN**

*Presented to a young person (age 20 or younger) who used life-saving skills to save the life of another or had a significant positive impact on the life of another.*

Estelle (Stella) and Evelyn Elkin are a small but mighty duo. This was evident when their mother experienced a medical emergency. Diagnosed with epilepsy in 2022, Stella and Evelyn's mom, Elizabeth, had trained the girls what to do if she had a seizure episode. On May 14, 2025, this training paid off.

Elizabeth and her daughters were home alone when Stella, age 6 at the time, and Evelyn, age 4, recognized that their mom was unresponsive and having a seizure. They immediately called their father and then Gigi, their grandmother, so one of them could call for help. Gigi called 911 and emergency responders were dispatched. The girls stayed close by their mom until help arrived. Protecting her younger sister from a scary situation, Stella took Evelyn to her room so she could be distracted by her iPad. In the meantime, Stella and Evelyn's uncle had come to the house to be with them.

Stella and Evelyn's bravery was exceptional not only that day, but during the two weeks that Elizabeth was hospitalized and not able to be home with her daughters. The quick action of these sweet and savvy girls was remarkable, ultimately saving their mom's life; proof certain that heroes can be any age and size.

*Nominated by Elizabeth Mikels, mother*

*Presented by*





## **LAW ENFORCEMENT AWARD**

### **TROOPER JAMES M. FELDBAUER, TROOPER LAUREN F. WARNER**

*Presented to law enforcement officers whose life-saving actions or emergency preparedness exemplify the very highest standards of their calling.*

On November 4, 2025, NYS Troopers James Feldbauer and Lauren Warner, Recruitment Officers with Troop C in Sidney, NY, were on their way to a recruitment event. They came upon what they thought was a vehicle in distress, stopped to assess the situation, and realized that a male across the road had a medical issue. They checked for signs of life and called 911.

The man was face down, unconscious, unresponsive and not breathing. Trooper Feldbauer and Trooper Warner administered CPR and used an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) on the victim, continuing CPR until medical personnel arrived.

Trooper Feldbauer commented that it was nice to see the training received at the NY State Police Academy kick in and to witness the teamwork with EMS, good Samaritans and law enforcement. "It's very rewarding to serve the community," said Trooper Warner, pleased that they can protect and serve. Often not knowing what they're going to encounter on a given day, these troopers seamlessly pivoted from recruitment to life-saving heroes that day.

*Nominated by Lucas Shuta, Troop C Commander Major*



## **MEDICAL AWARD**

### **KIMBERLY SULLIVAN, RN**

*Presented to an individual whose life-saving actions or emergency preparedness saved the life of another in a medical emergency.*

During the early morning hours of September 12, 2025 while leaving the gym, Kimberly Sullivan had her car window down and heard a man urgently calling for help while holding his chest. She got out of her car and saw that the man was bleeding and experiencing a serious medical emergency from an apparent gunshot wound.

Despite the fact that this was an ongoing and potentially dangerous scene, Kim jumped in. Although a registered nurse, Kim was outside of a clinical setting without equipment or medical resources available. Regardless of the circumstances, she immediately assessed the situation and began providing life-saving assistance. Applying pressure to the victim's wound with one hand while dialing 911 with the other, Kim used her nursing skills as she waited for EMS to arrive. Kimberly's main focus was to use her training to help someone in need.

While Kim doesn't work in emergency medicine, her belief is that situations like this remind us that healthcare professionals carry a responsibility to assist when the unexpected happens. She is grateful that she was able to provide care in what certainly was unexpected.

*Nominated by Emily Dorval, Director of Nursing, UHS*

***Presented by***





## LIFELINE AWARD

**LUMBERLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT, INC.: REPRESENTED BY LT. FIRE POLICE LORENZO KINRED; LOGAN KNIBBS, EMT; ANN STEIMLE, EMT FIREFIGHTER; JAMES STEIMLE, PAST CHIEF**

*Presented to individuals who used emergency communications, or emergency preparedness training or tools, to save the life of another in an emergency.*



In April 2025, members of the Lumberland Fire Department, along with multiple mutual aid crews and NY State Police, responded to a serious motor vehicle accident in Sullivan County. A vehicle had rolled over and was dangling upside down approximately 15 feet above a ravine.

Arriving at the scene, members of the Lumberland Fire Department quickly assessed the hazardous situation. The car was perched in a precarious position, posing significant danger not only to the trapped driver, but responding personnel. The driver was hanging upside down, suspended in her seatbelt. "It was like a giant Jenga," commented Ann Steimle, a 30-year first responder.

Using all available resources and calling for additional help, responders planned and executed a technically-demanding rescue. Through careful stabilization of the vehicle using lines, winches, and coordinated teamwork, the crews were able to safely extract the driver who remained alert and communicative throughout the rescue. Using "Jaws of Life" and other equipment, they thought "outside of the box" to rescue the driver through a small hole cut in the trunk of the car. After gently sliding the driver from the car, a human chain moved her up the steep ravine to an ambulance.



## **LIFELINE AWARD** *(cont.)*

The driver recovered, and expressed her immense gratitude to the responders (complete with a plate of cookies). The department's actions exemplify excellence in emergency response under difficult and unstable conditions. Their skill, training, professionalism, and precise and compassionate execution ensured a positive outcome in a situation that could have easily resulted in a tragedy.

*Nominated by Suzanne Edzenga, Town of Lumberland Supervisor*

*Presented by*





## MILITARY AWARD

### SOUTHERN TIER VETERANS SUPPORT GROUP; REPRESENTED BY ANTHONY PEDRO

*Presented to a member of the Armed Forces (active or former) whose life-saving actions or emergency preparedness exemplify the very highest standards of their calling, or to a person/organization dedicated to veteran services in our community.*

For the past 15 years, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the Board of Directors and 70 affiliate partners of the Southern Tier Veterans Support Group (STVSG) answer requests for veteran assistance within a 14-county area. In 2025 alone, the group assisted more than 1,600 veterans and their families. This assistance has tripled in recent years.

Anthony Pedro, President of STVSG, has an understanding of the transition to civilian life that many veterans face, after having served in the Army for 11 years. He leads the non-profit group that provides a network of resources for local veterans, service members and their families. Offering a broad range of services and assistance through trusted resources, dedicated partners, and direct support, STVSG enhances each veteran's physical, emotional, and economic well-being.

James Donohue is an example of how STVSG can change a life. A Navy veteran, James fell victim to substance and alcohol abuse, eventually finding himself homeless. With the help of STVSG and its partner organizations, James had a caseworker and was in an apartment within three days of reaching out to STVSG, right down to having dishes, silverware and towels. No longer did he need to rely on sleepless nights in his car.

James hopes that all veterans see that STVSG is right there to help. Forever grateful, James said, "I will be friends with them until the day I die." STVSG is a true community hero for its members' dedication and support of our veteran heroes.

*Nominated by Benjamin Margolius, Past President, STVSG*

**Presented by**

**Simmons-Rockwell**  
AUTOMOTIVE DEALERSHIPS





## **WORKPLACE SAFETY AWARD**

### **DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF NATE STOCKWIN**

*Presented to business owners, managers, or employees who used life-saving skills to save the life of another in a workplace setting, or whose workplace training programs and/or equipment exemplifies the highest standards of proactive emergency preparedness.*

On July 31, 2025, Deputy Fire Chief Nate Stockwin of the Homer Fire Department was dispatched to a car accident on Interstate 81. Arriving on the scene, he saw a pickup truck in the trees. The mangled truck landed on the driver's side. Nate immediately assumed a command role, assessing the hazards posed by the elevated vehicle and the complexity involved with entrapment. He coordinated with the dispatcher, arriving crews, the NYS Department of Transportation and other responders.

The driver couldn't escape due to the instability of the truck and surrounding branches. The passenger was trapped, hanging, and laying on the center console with a broken leg. Assistance arrived, and both the tree and truck were stabilized for safety. Brush was cleared, and the driver was taken out through the back window. Hydraulic rescue tools were used to open the truck door, cut through metal, and remove the dash off of the passenger. A ladder on the truck footboard served as a ramp where the woman was slid out on a backboard and taken to the highway to an ambulance.

Leadership, advanced rescue knowledge, technical expertise, and calm under pressure in a dynamic and hazardous situation helped reach a positive outcome. In the words of a true hero, this was "another day on the job" for Deputy Fire Chief Stockwin.

*Nominated by Jay Riley, Homer Fire Chief*

*Presented by*





### **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.