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Southern Tier Chapter

*Proudly Presents,*



*May 19, 2022*

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# NYS TROOPER DARRELL D. DENING & K9 KIN

## ANIMAL RESCUE AWARD

Presented to the family of a pet who was instrumental in saving a life, or an ordinary citizen who was instrumental in saving an animal's life.

\*Nominated by Benjamin R. Barton, New York State Police



In July 2021, Trooper Darrell Dening and his four-legged partner, K9 Kin, responded to a call: a 92-year-old man was missing after having left his home the night before.

Arriving at the home, Trooper Dening spoke with the man's sister who said that her brother had left at 3 p.m. the previous day. She had no idea where he might be and was especially concerned because her brother has early-onset dementia.

K9 Kin is certified in tracking, so to assist his partner, Trooper Dening--himself a K9 trainer--took the missing man's pillowcase as reference for Kin, starting at the back of the house. A storm picked up, with wind and rain making tracking more difficult as the scents dissipated. Trooper Dening spoke with a neighbor who directed him to a cabin across the road. Trooper Dening called for another Trooper to join him and also spoke with a woman who approached him indicating she had heard screams, but thought it might have been a dog. Following power lines to a wooded area, Trooper Dening noted that Kin had picked up a scent and began running, with Trooper Dening alongside. Within approximately a mile, he could hear a man calling for help.



They reached the man, who was on a hillside approximately 1 to 1 ½ miles from his residence, sitting up against a tree. The man had driven his lawn tractor there, gotten stuck, and had become disoriented when he attempted to walk home. The situation was made more difficult because he had lost his glasses.

Suffering from hypothermia, the patient was taken to the hospital for treatment. After he was released, he wanted to meet Kin which Trooper Dening arranged. Trooper Dening commented that he appreciated that this situation ended as it did, and was pleased that it all worked out. Trooper Dening and K9 Kin exhibited outstanding persistence and teamwork, traits of real heroes.

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## JOEL CADBURY AND TONY WHITAKER

### LIFELINE AWARD

Presented to an individual or a 911 dispatcher or caller who utilized emergency communications or preparedness to save the life of another.

\*Nominated by Christopher Katz, Trumansburg EMS



Paramedic Joel Cadbury and EMT Tony Whitaker were dispatched on September 20, 2021, after a 911 call reported an incident. Joel was the first to arrive at the scene where a woman had collapsed; he had no other information. The door was locked and he could hear the patient's voice, but she was unable to crawl to the door to unlock it. In order to reach the patient quickly, Joel opted not to wait for the arrival of the fire department for a forcible entry, but instead shimmied through a kitchen window after removing an air conditioner. He began to assess the situation and unlocked the front door so that Tony could enter. Within 45 to 60 seconds, the carbon monoxide (CO) detector on Joel's and Tony's "first in" bag went off, alerting them to dangerously high levels of CO.



They immediately removed the patient to the outside and called for the fire department and utility company due to the high CO situation. The patient was exhibiting multiple symptoms consistent with CO poisoning. Once treated with high-flow oxygen, she began to revive. Despite critically high levels of carbon monoxide in her system, it was determined she could be treated at a local hospital. The patient recovered.

In addition to Joel's and Tony's quick actions, the important tool in their assessment of the scene was the CO alarm. By immediately detecting and alerting them to high CO levels, they were able to take appropriate steps more quickly and accurately. Had the patient not been able to call 911 or had Joel and Tony not responded quickly with ingenuity and persistence, this could have been a tragic event. Joel, a paramedic for 30 years, and Tony, a fire department member since he was 16 years old and an EMT since 2018, certainly exemplify what it means to be real heroes.

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## JUDITH M. KUNZ

### BLOOD DONOR/SERVICES AWARD

Presented to an ordinary citizen or company, who has helped save countless lives through blood donations.

\*Nominated by James Kunz



Some traditions carry through many decades, and for Judy Kunz, one of her traditions is giving blood.

Her 40-year commitment to giving blood began in high school when her school hosted a blood drive. Eager to help, Judy donated and had a positive experience. Her college offered the same opportunity, where on-campus blood drives provided a convenient way for Judy to donate. Judy's father was a blood donor and she remembers when her mom had to give her own blood prior to surgery, so Judy knew the importance of giving blood.

Fast forward to her career and Judy found yet another

avenue for giving blood when her employer, United Health Services, offered blood drives at her job site. Employees were encouraged to participate and Judy stepped up once again. Obviously a lucky charm for blood donation centers, Judy found that her church then started hosting blood drives. Once again she had an opportune way to donate. Judy has given as many times as she could, with breaks only during medical situations or when raising her children.

Judy remarked that giving blood makes her feel good, is positive for the community and isn't hard to do. She enjoys receiving the Red Cross emails that describe where her blood was used and is glad to know she has helped others. While claiming that she can't be a firefighter or EMT, Judy says that she can certainly give blood which is so vitally needed. May Judy's 40 years of giving continue with gusto!

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## CAIT CRISMAN AND EMILY SANDERSON, BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY

### EDUCATION AWARD, CAIT CRISMAN

Presented to an educator or layperson who used life-saving skills to save the life of another in an educational setting, or had a significant impact inside or outside of the school.

\*Nominated by David Hubney, Binghamton University



In February 2020, COVID-19 was on the radar of Binghamton University (BU), with response planning underway in the areas of Personal Protective Equipment, testing and quarantine/isolation housing should the needs arise. Arise they did, to a degree that wasn't anticipated at the outset of what has become a two-year-plus pandemic.

Cait Crisman, Emergency Management Coordinator, was tasked with planning and executing Quarantine/Isolation housing for 7,300 eligible on-campus residential students. Emily Sanderson, Continuity Planner, managed the surveillance testing program which provided testing for students, faculty and staff, in addition to others. Both initially thought that these specific assignments would be brief and somewhat small-scale, but this rapidly morphed due to changing COVID conditions.

At peak Cait's team transported, housed, fed and supplied health and wellness care to approximately 400 students who had been exposed to or tested positive for COVID-19. This started with one dedicated building which grew to four. Isolation facilities further expanded to include a satellite campus and local hotels. The highest priority was to ensure students' mental and physical well-being, as it was difficult for many students to cope with being alone. A system was devised for students to order food; hot, fresh meals were delivered twice a day. Zoom sessions were conducted and a 24/7 helpline was staffed.



Emily and her team of nearly 200 administered approximately 2,000 COVID-19 tests per day at peak, for a total of more than 200,000 tests (and counting). She coordinated efforts across numerous university departments, including catering, athletics, physical facilities and others. Testing facilities remained open through all school breaks, when students returned to campus, and during special events.

Cait and Emily were inspired to see the university community pivot and come together during such uncertain times. They both wanted students to have the authentic college experience, and shared the goal of providing support and keeping people as safe as possible. Due to their tireless efforts, both the quarantine/isolation housing and surveillance testing programs at BU served as leading examples to the rest of the SUNY system. Through their dedication, personal sacrifices, flexibility, professionalism and leadership, Cait and Emily found creative solutions which reduced COVID spread at BU and in the Greater Binghamton area. Their heroic efforts continue to this day.

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# NYS TROOPER DAVID M. DRAUDT

## GOOD SAMARITAN AWARD

Presented to an ordinary citizen or professional rescuer who used life-saving skills to save the life of another, or had a significant meaningful impact on the life of another.

\*Nominated by Sergeant Bryan C. Meehan, New York State Police



Every parent hopes they will never face a situation where their child is choking. On November 29, 2021, Trooper David Draudt was dispatched by Broome County 911 to respond to this exact scenario involving a two-year-old boy. Trooper Draudt was in the neighborhood and only a few blocks away. When he arrived at the house, Trooper Draudt put on his medical gloves so he'd be ready to perform any necessary life-saving measures. Once in the house, Trooper Draudt saw that the mother was on the floor, holding the little boy in her arms, and that he was unresponsive – not breathing and blue in color. The boy's mom said that her son had been eating a pancake and began to choke. She'd given him blows on the back but it hadn't helped. Trooper Draudt immediately called for backup.

Trooper Draudt first tried to clear the child's airway with his finger. When this didn't work, he began a series of back blows in an effort to dislodge the food. All the time he was calm and reassuring, helping the mother to stay calm as well. Thankfully, Trooper Draudt's actions were successful, the obstruction was expelled and the little boy began breathing again. EMTs arrived and continued medical care.

With his prompt response and proper use of his first responder training, Trooper Draudt saved the little boy's life and is indeed a true hero.

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# **GENEGANTSLET FIRE CO., GREENE EMERGENCY SQUAD, GREENE FIRE DEPT., GUTHRIE AIR**

## **MEDICAL AWARD**

Presented to a medical professional, organization, or ordinary citizen whose life-saving action or preparedness exemplifies the very highest standards of their calling.

\*Nominated by Travis Flanagan



On March 13, 2021, Genegantslet Fire Company received a call that a man was caught in a corn picker, having been pulled into the machine after misstepping. Fire Chief Ken Whitmore was nearby, knew the remote area and responded quickly. Upon arrival he made contact with the patient and, seeing the severity of the situation, called for Greene Fire Department, Greene Emergency Squad, a helicopter and other specialized equipment. He immediately implemented the Incident Command System, an integrated, on-scene, standardized incident management system used among emergency responders, as he knew there would be several tasks to handle among multiple agencies.



Despite narrow, snow- and ice-covered roads, others arrived to assist. Paramedic Andrew Patterson from the Greene Emergency Squad was in the area at a training session when he headed to the scene. The patient was conscious and with the help of another provider, Andrew placed a tourniquet on the patient, administered fluids and medication, and stabilized him.

Meanwhile, Guthrie Air had received the call for assistance and landed at the scene after a 14-minute flight. Fortunately, PA-based medical helicopters can carry blood (which at the time NY medical helicopters could not) and Flight Medic Rich Mosher administered a blood transfusion in the field. Continuing with patient care, Rich's colleague handled logistics with the surgical team at the Upstate University Hospital Trauma Center where the patient was transported after being extricated from the farm machinery after the three-hour rescue.

As a health care provider himself, the patient was very active in his own care that day, much to the surprise of those who were assisting him. A number of factors made this very complex situation an organized, remarkable response including multiple responders being close by and being familiar with the area, using the universal Incident Command System, the available medical helicopter having blood on board, and the cooperation and trust exhibited among the four responding entities.

The patient is truly remarkable as well. He stated to Rich on the flight to Syracuse that he would walk before his baby was born that upcoming July. He did, despite having lost both legs below the knee. Another amazing outcome: The patient and community advocated for a legislative change that would allow NY-based medical helicopters to carry blood as those in PA can. This is now law in NY State and will no doubt assist others facing traumatic injuries.

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# ANTHONY J. HANDSOM

## GOOD SAMARITAN YOUTH AWARD

Presented to an ordinary citizen involved in rescuing a person from a life-threatening situation or had a meaningful impact in the life of another or the community.

\*Nominated by Brian A. Petrella, Dryden Ambulance



On August 4, 2021, 12-year-old Anthony Handsom was upstairs in his room watching television. His dad and three younger sisters were downstairs; his mom was at work. This typical evening in the Handsom household rapidly changed when Anthony heard a “bang” like nothing he had ever heard before.

Immediately running downstairs, Anthony found that his dad had collapsed. Shielding his sisters from what was happening, Anthony directed them to go upstairs. He called 911, placed a pillow under his father’s head and followed the instructions from the 911 operator. He checked to see if his dad was breathing and found a pulse that was detectable but weak. Had breathing stopped or a pulse not been found, Anthony was prepared to perform further lifesaving actions. Dryden Ambulance arrived on the scene to provide medical care. Paramedics were impressed that Anthony not only recognized this emergency, but swiftly called 911 and provided lifesaving measures.

While Anthony said that this was a scary moment because he didn’t know what happened, he did know what to do, having learned about calling 911 from his parents and at school. He made sure to “not let fear take over” and tried to stay as calm as possible.

Anthony’s dad recovered and is now taking a lower dose of the medication that triggered his medical emergency. Anthony said that he was excited to help his dad and that they have “a good bond,” which will continue thanks to Anthony’s quick action.

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## HENRY HIGHT AND JESS LANZA

### WORKPLACE SAFETY AWARD

Presented to a business owner, manager, or employee whose preparedness or life-saving actions exemplify the very highest standards of their calling.

\*Nominated by Christopher Voulo, Fly Creek Fire Chief



In July 2021, a call was received regarding a confined space/structural collapse with a man trapped in a culvert. The Fly Creek Fire Company was dispatched and responded. Assistant Chief Jess Lanza was at home, only a mile from the scene. When he arrived, Jess found three men in the water with one stuck in a culvert pipe; his waders had filled with water and pulled him into the pipe. The man's fellow workers from the Town of Otsego Highway Department were in the water holding their co-worker above water.

Assistant Chief Lanza grabbed tubular webbing to use as a drag device and temporary sling to keep the visibly tired man's head above water and stabilize him. Assistant Chief Henry Hight arrived and deployed a cold water rescue sling and life ring for further flotation. The man was successfully removed from the culvert, brought to safety, and moved into an ambulance for medical care.

Fortunately, the Fly Creek Fire Company had recently obtained water rescue equipment and had just started swift water and ice water training. That timing, combined with Town of Otsego Highway Department personnel who were assisting their co-worker on the job site prior to the arrival of Jess and Henry, led to a successful rescue. Jess and Henry said that their training "kicked in," helping them to slow down, see the big picture, find the hazards and mitigate the situation. Both volunteers, Jess and Henry have served their community for 7 and 16 years respectively and are both true heroes.

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# AARON BLAASCH

## GOOD NEIGHBOR AWARD

Presented to an ordinary citizen or professional rescuer involved in rescuing a person from a life-threatening situation or had a meaningful impact in the life of another in the community.

\*Nominated by Dr. Tonia Thompson, Superintendent, Binghamton City School District



In August 2021, 15-year-old Aaron Blasch, soon to be entering his junior year at Binghamton High School, was helping his dad with their lawn and yard maintenance business. Aaron and his dad arrived at a client's home; Aaron began trimming hedges, and his dad headed up the street to begin another job.

Shortly after Aaron began his work, he noticed a woman who appeared to be searching for something in a car parked in the driveway. Continuing his work, Aaron then noticed she had passed out in the car. Her breathing was irregular and she was struggling to catch her breath.

After a call to 911, Aaron closely followed the directions of the 911 operator. He managed to remove the woman from the car despite her being in an odd position and laid her flat on the ground, making sure she didn't fall. By this time, the woman wasn't breathing. Aaron swiped her mouth and administered CPR, and at last she was able to take a breath. Within a few minutes paramedics arrived and took over from Aaron to provide medical

care. Aaron had called his dad at some point to alert him to the situation, and his father arrived in time to witness Aaron's swift actions to save the woman's life.

Not knowing the woman's fate, Aaron removed his cap and began to pray for the woman. Paramedics were able to fully reinstate her breathing, a relief for all involved.

Aaron said that it made him feel great to be able to help the woman stay alive and to "see another human being on earth for another day." Despite not having formal CPR training, Aaron's ability to remember this information from videos he had seen and follow the guidance of the 911 operator made all the difference. Aaron observed a dangerous situation, and instead of hanging back, he immediately took decisive and impactful action. These are the marks of a true hero.

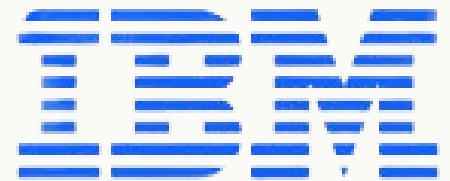
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