

11th Annual Heroes Day in Tucson honors outstanding local first responders Nov. 6

Banner - University Medical Center honored to be a part of event

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TUCSON, Ariz. (Nov. 1, 2019) – The 11th annual **2019 Heroes Day** award ceremony will honor representatives from Davis Monthan Air Force Base, the Tucson Police Department, the Arizona Department of Public Safety, the Tucson Fire Department and the Northwest Fire District, in recognition of life-saving acts of bravery.

The awards ceremony will be held at **9 a.m., Wednesday, Nov. 6 at the La Encantada Shopping Center Courtyard, 2905 E. Skyline Drive, Tucson.** The public is invited to attend.

Andrew Tang, MD, medical director of the Level 1 Trauma Center at Banner – University Medical Center, will introduce the honorees. KOLD News 13 anchor **Dan Marries** will emcee the event.

In addition to the awards ceremony in the morning, to further celebrate first responders and their contributions to the community, event partners **Jack Furrier Tire & Auto Care and Banner - University Medicine**, will host all first responders to a free lunch from 11:15 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. on Nov. 6 at one of the following Jack Furrier locations: 5852 E. Speedway Blvd., 370 W. Grant Road, 51 E. Valencia Road, 7846 N. Oracle Road and 4291 W Ina Road.

Heroes Day Honorees 2019

Arizona Department of Public Safety: Trooper Alexander Woytenko, Trooper Robert Palmer, Trooper Corey Minnix, Trooper Cesar Fimbres, & Trooper Michael Blute

After witnessing a car accident, Trooper Michael Blute responded to the scene where a fire was breaking out. Fellow Troopers Cesar Fimbres, Alex Woytenko, Robert Palmer and Corey Minnix arrived as back-up. They worked at considerable risk to themselves to quell the fire and rescue a driver trapped within the burning car. Moments before the vehicle became entirely engulfed, the team freed the driver, saving his life.

Davis Monthan Air Force Base, 48th and 79th Rescue Squadrons: Captain John P. Connor, Senior Airman Raul A. Martinez, and First Lieutenant Jorge I. Pala

Captain John P. Connor commanded a 9-man team in a rapid response to rescue fishermen stranded after a crane collapsed on their fishing vessel in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Mexico. As primary medic and translator, Senior Airman Raul A. Martinez provided multiple life-saving medical interventions and translated crucial patient information. First Lieutenant Jorge I. Pala was the second in command and calculated and maneuvered the HC-130J Combat King on two personnel airdrops and one resupply drop.

After diving into the ocean to save the two fishermen, the team worked tirelessly during the 58-hour transport to a care facility, performing life-saving medical interventions and teleconferences with neurosurgeons, communicating with Mexican authorities and resupplying the rescue efforts.

Arizona Department of Public Safety: Trooper David Rocha

Called to help assist after an RV overturned on Interstate 8, Trooper David Rocha risked his life to enter the unstable vehicle in an effort to free the occupants inside, including a young child. In spite of the dangerous conditions inside the crashed vehicle, Trooper Rocha remained inside and worked to free the boy and his grandmother from the vehicle as other responders worked from the outside – it took only 9 minutes from when Trooper Rocha responded to the scene to remove the occupants from the vehicle.

Tucson Police Department: Officer Noah Wade & Officer Michael Cooper

As Officer Noah Wade and Officer Michael Cooper responded to an altercation at an apartment complex, they found the apartments on fire. Outside the apartment was a group of people gathered around an individual with a life-threatening stab wound to their leg. The officers stayed composed under pressure, applied a tourniquet to the victim and moved them away from the burning building, saving the person's life.

Awards of Distinction 2019

Tucson Fire Department: Captain James "Chris" Kelaher & Firefighter Brett Bradshaw

Captain Chris Kelaher and Firefighter Brett Bradshaw responded to a rescue alarm for a person stuck in a tree, pinned face down by a heavy limb nearly 30 feet in the air. Due to the height, dangerous conditions, limited personnel and surrounding power lines, aerial ladders could not get near to the person. Captain Kelaher and Firefighter Bradshaw donned harnesses and climbed 35-foot raised ladders to scale the tree and assist the climber to safety.

Northwest Fire District: Deputy Fire Marshal Ian Robinson


While off-duty, Deputy Fire Marshal Ian Robinson witnessed the aftermath of a crash along I-10. Responding, he found three people injured and one in critical condition. Deputy Fire Marshal Robinson called for assistance and stabilized those injured until Tucson Fire Department arrived. His intervention while off-duty saved lives.

About Banner - University Medical Center Tucson and South

Banner - University Medical Center Tucson and Banner - University Medical Center South, are part of Banner - University Medicine, a premier academic medical network. These institutions are academic medical centers for the University of Arizona College of Medicine - Tucson. Included on the two campuses are Diamond Children's Medical Center and many specialty clinics. The two academic medical centers are part of Arizona-based Banner Health, one of the largest nonprofit health care systems in the country, with 28 hospitals in six states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Nebraska, Nevada and Wyoming. For more information, visit

www.BannerHealth.com/UniversityTucson or www.bannerhealth.com/UniversitySouth

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