



CALIFORNIA AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL  
*— Stars of Life —*  
CELEBRATION  
AND LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT



APRIL 22-24, 2013  
SHERATON GRAND HOTEL – SACRAMENTO, CA

HEALTH CARE'S ESSENTIAL FIRST RESPONDERS

# Stars of Life



**Helen Pierson**  
Chair, Board of Directors  
California Ambulance  
Association

**C**ongratulations to all of our 2013 Stars of Life. Your actions, whether from a single heroic incident or a career-long performance record, demonstrate that you have shown the spirit and commitment that it takes to be the best of the best.

Too often the work of our paramedics, EMTs, emergency medical dispatchers, and other key support personnel goes without notice. Neither the public nor the media get the opportunity to see the contribution each of you makes to ensure that highly specialized pre-hospital medical care is delivered day in and day out to the communities you serve. The single common thread that links you all here today is that you do not do it for the money or the glory, you do it because you love it.

Today, you had the opportunity to meet with your assembly members and/or state senators. I am hopeful you found it to be a positive and informative experience. The California Ambulance Association is working hard to secure increased reimbursement for

the services we provide to California's over 10 million Medi-Cal beneficiaries. We also advocate for you in the regulatory process working to ensure that proposed changes in education, training, equipment, or other areas that impact your work environment are fair, practical and necessary. Your first-hand experience as EMS professionals is a message that will resonate with our legislators.

Let us not forget our generous sponsors of this year's Stars of Life Celebration, for without their support, this event would not have been possible. Thank you **BoundTree Medical, California Ambulance Sales, Cindy Elbert Insurance Services, DerManouel Insurance Group, King-American Ambulance, Life-Assist, Inc.** and **Medic Ambulance Service, Inc.**

Lastly, we are honored to have Dr. Howard Backer, Director of the California Emergency Medical Services Authority and Michael Wilkening, Undersecretary of the California Health & Human Services Agency as our special guests at this event.

Tonight we celebrate you, the private ambulance industry's Stars of Life. We thank you for your commitment to your patients, co-workers, company and communities you serve. 

## Stars of Life Awards Banquet — April 13, 2013 —

### Welcome

**Helen Pierson, Chair of the Board**

### Special Recognition

**Dr. Howard Backer, Emergency Medical Services Authority**

### Guest Speaker

**Michael Wilkening, California Health & Human Services**

### Presentation of Stars of Life Recognition

### Closing Remarks

# Thank You Sponsors!



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**Dinner Sponsor**

**Howard Backer, MD, MPH, FACEP**  
**Director**  
**California Emergency Medical Services Authority**



**Howard Backer, MD, MPH, FACEP**, is the Director of the California Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) where he leads the department in establishing and enforcing standards for EMS personnel, coordinating with local EMS systems, overseeing the development of statewide specialty care systems, and preparing for and responding to disasters.

Dr. Backer previously served for ten years at the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), where he held a variety of assignments including as Chief of the Immunization Branch and as Interim Director and Interim State Health Officer.

From 2008 to 2011, Backer was Associate Secretary for Emergency Preparedness at the California Health and Human Services Agency where he worked closely with EMSA, CDPH, the Department of Social Services and other CHHS departments on plans to coordinate public health and medical disaster response as well as mass care and shelter issues. In that capacity, he served as a consultant to the Ukrainian Ministry of Emergencies and was part of a delegation to Chile following the devastating 2010 earthquake there. He will continue to

coordinate the development of Emergency Function 8 (Public Health and Medical) for the California State Emergency Plan.

Prior to government service, Dr. Backer practiced emergency medicine full time for 25 years in rural, urban, and suburban settings. He received a Doctor of Medicine from the University of California at San Francisco, a Master of Public Health from the University of California at Berkeley, a Bachelor of Sciences from the University of Michigan and is board certified in Emergency Medicine, Preventive Medicine and Public Health. He continues to work clinical hours in Urgent Care at the UC Berkeley Student Health Center.

Dr. Backer has a lifelong interest in wilderness and travel medicine. He is a founding member of the Wilderness Medical Society and a Fellow of the Academy of Wilderness Medicine. He also serves as medical consultant for an international adventure travel company and is a national expert in field water disinfection and infectious diseases of travelers.

Dr. Backer lives in Piedmont, with his wife, who is a registered nurse, and one of three daughters. In his time off, he likes to spend time in the Sierra Nevada mountains or do international travel to remote areas. 

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Kyle Bush**

**Gold Cross  
Ambulance  
Service  
El Centro**

**Kyle Bush**  
**Paramedic**

Kyle first started with Schaefer Ambulance at our branch in San Diego, CA. While working with us he has been a positive force within our organization. In 2010, Kyle obtained his paramedic certification from EMSTA College in San Diego. After completing his training, Kyle transferred to our Gold Cross operation in Imperial County. Over the past 3 years he has been working in the field as a paramedic and Field Training Officer. Providing service to the community has inspired Kyle to make a contribution to his fellow coworkers by becoming an FTO. While in this position Kyle has been able to share his experiences, incorporate safe practices and reinforce the importance of complying with company policies and procedures. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Arturo Carreon**

**American  
Ambulance  
Fresno**

**Arturo Carreon**  
**Paramedic**

Arturo Carreon was selected by his peers as American Ambulance Fresno County Paramedic of the Year for 2012. Arturo began his career in 2002 as an EMT Cadet, a community based initiative that focused on educating younger individuals in EMS careers and providing them with an EMT education and subsequent employment with American Ambulance. Once he had completed the EMT course, Arturo began working in the busy Fresno 9-1-1 system. Always enjoying the opportunity to help those in need and driven to do more, Arturo completed the paramedic program in 2005. Today he has one of the highest total 9-1-1 responses and patient contacts in the company. Arturo says the most important aspect of his job is being nice, "When you are nice, people will always be nice back." Arturo purchased a house this year and on his time off he has been slowly fixing it up; he is upgrading the back yard so he and his two daughters Natalie, age eight, and Angelina, age six, can spend summer days playing together. He is engaged to Roxanne Dias, a registered nurse. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Shawn Crocker**  
*Hall Ambulance  
Service, Inc.*  
*Bakersfield*

**Shawn Crocker**  
**Paramedic**

Shawn Crocker and Brian McChristian were dispatched to a fast food chain for a cardiac arrest on February 11, 2013 at 1:00 pm. They arrived at the scene to find an unconscious woman receiving CPR by the Kern County Fire Department. Shawn assumed patient care and directed the team to establish a BLS airway while continuing CPR. After an ECG showed the patient to have no electrical activity, CPR was continued and an IV was started followed by ALS medications. The ECG changed to V-fib and the patient was defibrillated with a change to normal sinus rhythm. An ALS airway was attempted but the patient was biting down on the airway. The crew began transport and by the time they arrived at the hospital the patient was awake and alert and answering questions. The patient remains in the hospital and recently shared that she hopes to meet with the crew soon. ✨

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Joe DeQuattro**  
*Medic Ambulance  
Service, Inc.*  
*Solano*

**Joe DeQuattro**  
**Paramedic**

Paramedics Joe DeQuattro and Sam Humphries are being recognized for their rapid and excellent treatment of an adult male in cardiac arrest. The patient had pulled over at a gas station because he had chest pain that was unbearable. When EMS personnel arrived, the patient no longer complained of chest pain. All of the patient's vital signs checked out normal and the patient did not want to go the hospital. However, Joe and Sam pleaded with the patient to be seen and the patient finally gave in and agreed to be transported. While being loaded into the ambulance, the patient suddenly became unresponsive, lost pulses and went into a lethal cardiac rhythm. Joe and his partner rendered immediate CPR and defibrillation. The patient was defibrillated three times en route to the hospital. In the ambulance, the patient regained his pulses and upon his arrival at the hospital went for immediate cardiac surgery. The patient made a complete recovery and was able to meet his life saving crew at ceremony in Fairfield, CA this past year.

Joe has been in EMS since 2002, when he started at Medic Ambulance Service as an EMT. In 2009, Joe was promoted to paramedic. He lives in Vacaville, CA with his wife Lacy and 18-month old son Cayden. In his spare time, he enjoys traveling, camping, riding ATVs and spending time with his family. ✨

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# Stars of Life

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**Sherard Flores**

*Schaefer  
Ambulance  
Los Angeles*

**Sherard Flores**  
**Paramedic**

Mr. Flores has been working in the EMS industry for more than 4 years. During his time in the EMS industry he has worked for Long Beach Fire Department and Advance Fire Service. Each organization has contributed to his patient care development. Mr. Flores participates as a preceptor for San Antonio Community College. In October of 2012, Sherard became a parent with the birth of his son Marcel. Mr. Flores is standing before us today as result of his involvement in assisting a NICU team with a very difficult case. At the end of his shift, Mr. Flores was dispatched to a facility in Northern Los Angeles County. Mr. Flores and his partner were assisting an NICU team with a 6-month-old female who was in respiratory distress. The Emergency Room was saturated with patients and the staff was not able to assist with preparing this patient for transport. Without skipping a beat Mr. Flores and Mr. Keehne jumped in to assist with stabilizing the patient. They aggressively worked on the patient for more than 4 hours. Due to their involvement the patient was successfully transported to a hospital that could better meet her medical needs. \*

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# Stars of Life

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**Kent Frazier**

*Hall Ambulance  
Service, Inc.  
Bakersfield*

**Kent Frazier**  
**Paramedic**

Paramedic Kent Frazier and EMT Brian White, both from Taft, have been partners since 2006. On the morning of June 22, 2012 at 5:30 am, Kent and Brian were dispatched to a residence in Taft for a cerebral vascular accident. They arrived to find a pulseless and apneic patient. With assistance from Kern County Firefighters, CPR was initiated while Kent and Brian prepared ALS equipment. The ECG indicated V-Fib. Kent defibrillated two times and saw the ECG rhythm convert to a normal sinus rhythm. Kent secured an ALS airway and started an IV. The patient was transported to the Taft airport and handed off to the medevac crew with a strong pulse and a good blood pressure. The patient made a full recovery and was discharged home only days after the event. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Acina Hansen**

*San Luis  
Ambulance  
San Luis Obispo*

**Acina Hansen**  
**Paramedic**

Nine years ago, Acina Hansen began working for San Luis Ambulance as an Emergency Medical Technician, and has since become a Paramedic. During her time at the company, she has always been hardworking and dedicated. What sets Acina apart from other staff members is her consistently positive and upbeat attitude. She is very well liked by co-workers and allied agency staff. By always avoiding negativity, she sets a positive tone for others to follow. Acina has become a highly respected paramedic who consistently receives the highest marks on her real time field reviews. Due to her quality patient care and ability to positively interact with her co-workers, she was appointed to the San Luis Ambulance Quality Improvement Committee, where she has been a welcome addition. Over the last year, she has been very involved with the San Luis Ambulance Training Group as a new staff member trainer and Emergency Vehicle Operator Course instructor. Acina was recently honored as the San Luis Ambulance Staff Member of the Year for 2012. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Perry Hookey**

*Medic Ambulance  
Service, Inc.  
Solano*

**Perry Hookey**  
**Education Coordinator / Paramedic**

Perry Hookey is being honored for his heroic efforts while trying to save a man from a burning 18-wheel semi-truck that went off of an overpass and caught on fire. Perry was on his way to work when a semi-truck came off the overpass and down an embankment. With the semi-truck on fire, Perry risked his life to extricate the man from the burning vehicle. The man later succumbed to his injuries and passed away in the hospital, however Perry's efforts enabled the victim's family to say their goodbyes and follow his wishes. Perry and the man's family were able to meet and the family gave their heartfelt thanks for this heroic act. Perry is a Paramedic and the Education/Training Coordinator for Medic Ambulance Service. His EMS career began 25 years ago as an EMT in rural Mississippi. He has since served as a paramedic, field training officer, paramedic field supervisor and critical care air medical flight paramedic. One of the most memorable moments of his career was being chosen to serve as a paramedic representative for the U.S. Olympic Torch Relay during the 1996 Olympic Games. In 2005 he moved to California. As a Paramedic FTO and the Education/Training Coordinator for Medic Ambulance Service, he is responsible not only for paramedic duties, but also the development and instruction of required and elective educational courses for Medic Ambulance Service employees, fire agencies, hospitals, medical/dental offices, convalescent facilities, schools and the public. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Alan Hughry, Jr.**

**Medic Ambulance  
Service, Inc.**

**Solano**

**Alan Hughry, Jr.**  
**Paramedic**

Alan Hughry is being honored as Medic Ambulance's 2013 Paramedic of the Year for his contributions as a model employee as well as for his rapid and excellent treatment of a 6-year old cardiac arrest patient. Thanks to CPR and defibrillations administered by Alan and his partner, the patient regained his pulses and is alive and well today. Alan had his sights on becoming a police officer until he was involved in a motor vehicle accident in 2002. Medic Ambulance was the first to arrive to his aid. Alan says, "En route to the hospital, paramedic Barbi Watson shared her experience and knowledge with me about the world of EMS. It was because of her, I changed my career." Paramedic Watson convinced him to take an EMT class at Solano Community College and to do a ride along with her. Alan said he got to see firsthand the difference a good paramedic can make in a time of crisis and devoted himself to being just as good as she was if not better. Alan soon began his EMS tenure with Medic Ambulance Service as an emergency dispatcher and joined the Suisun Fire Protection District as a firefighter/EMT. In 2004, Alan transferred to the ambulance side of Medic Ambulance and was promoted to paramedic in 2007. As the Paramedic of the Year, Alan will receive an all expenses paid trip to Disneyland to attend the CAA Annual Convention. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Sam Humphries**

**Medic Ambulance  
Service, Inc.**

**Solano**

**Sam Humphries**  
**EMT**

Paramedics Joe DeQuattro and Sam Humphries are being recognized for their rapid and excellent treatment of an adult male in cardiac arrest. The patient had pulled over at a gas station because he had chest pain that was unbearable. When EMS personnel arrived, the patient no longer complained of chest pain. All of the patient's vital signs checked out normal and the patient did not want to go the hospital. However, Joe and Sam pleaded with the patient to be seen and the patient finally gave in and agreed to be transported. While being loaded into the ambulance, the patient suddenly became unresponsive, lost pulses and went into a lethal cardiac rhythm. Joe and his partner rendered immediate CPR and defibrillation. The patient was defibrillated three times en route to the hospital. In the ambulance, the patient regained his pulses and upon his arrival at the hospital went for immediate cardiac surgery. The patient made a complete recovery and was able to meet his life saving crew at ceremony in Fairfield, CA this past year. Sam has worked for Medic Ambulance as an EMT for almost two years. He began his career in EMS five years ago as a volunteer with Napa County Fire where he has recently been promoted to Captain. Sam says he loves the opportunity to help his fellow Californians in a time of crisis, whether locally on an ambulance or on an OES Strike team. Sam has been married for 12 years to his amazing and supportive wife, Nicole. In his personal time, Sam is an avid surfer and artist. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Anthony Keehne**

*Schaefer  
Ambulance  
Los Angeles*

**Anthony Keehne**  
**Paramedic**

Mr. Keehne has been working in the EMS industry for more than 8 years. He has worked with Advance Fire Service and as a reserve medic with Santa Paula Fire. The experience he has gained while working with us as well as other agencies has contributed significantly to his patient care skills. Mr. Keehne graduated with his Bachelor of Arts from UCSB. Mr. Flores is standing before us today as result of his involvement in assisting a NICU team with a very difficult case. At the end of his shift, Mr. Keehne was dispatched to a facility in Northern Los Angeles County. Mr. Keehne and his partner were assisting an NICU team with a 6-month-old female who was in respiratory distress. The Emergency Room was saturated with patients and the staff was not able to assist with preparing this patient for transport. Without skipping a beat Mr. Keehne and Mr. Flores jumped in to assist with stabilizing the patient. They aggressively worked on the patient for more than 4 hours. Due to their involvement the patient was successfully transported to a hospital that could better meet her medical needs. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Kelly Kinkade**

*Riggs Ambulance  
Service  
Merced*

**Kelly Kinkade**  
**EMT**

Kelly Kinkade, of Riggs Ambulance Service, is being awarded the Star of Life for her relentless work ethic and desire to succeed daily in her role as an Emergency Medical Technician over the last three years. Kinkade is a hardworking individual who is very independent and responsible. She is constantly praised as one of the best EMT Field Training Officers for Riggs Ambulance Service. Kinkade is a valuable asset in advancing Emergency Medical Services careers and opportunities for youth in Merced County. She has recently been appointed as Head Advisor for the Riggs Ambulance Service Medical Services Explorer Post 1948. Her dedication to EMS is extraordinary and the company very proud to honor her accomplishments as a Star of Life. \*

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# Stars of Life

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**Nathan Kline**  
*Hall Ambulance  
Service, Inc.*  
*Bakersfield*

**Nathan Kline**  
**Paramedic**

Nathan Kline was awarded the Hall Ambulance Service, Inc. 2012 President's Award for exemplary customer service by Founder & President Harvey L. Hall in March 2013. This prestigious company award is bestowed upon the employee that best exemplifies patient care and customer service in a manner consistent with Mr. Hall's expectations and commitment to leading a Hall Way of Life. Nathan was hired as an EMT in March, 2006, attended the Fall 2008 Paramedic Training Program, and was licensed as a Paramedic in 2009. Nathan is currently assigned to Metro Bakersfield and conscientiously shares his positive attitude and customer service skills with new hires when serving as an EMT Preceptor. During his career at Hall Ambulance Service, Inc., Nathan has had two life saves and has received 35 customer compliments. Not every customer encounter ends in life saving medical care. Perhaps we offer nothing more than a ride and some comfort during the customer's crisis of the day. Whether it's a business man in a suit or a homeless man on the street, Nathan takes every single customer contact as an opportunity to excel at kind, compassionate customer service. \*

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# Stars of Life

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**Jonathon Knauf**  
*Mercy Medical  
Transportation,  
Inc.*  
*Escondido*

**Jonathon Knauf**  
**Paramedic Supervisor**

Jonathon Knauf was chosen for the Star of Life Award because of his dedication to his community. Jonathon has been an integral part of Mercy Medical Transportation since he joined Mercy Medical Transportation as an EMT in 2002. Jon consistently strives to do better in his job and in 2006, he earned his Paramedic license. He later became a Paramedic Supervisor and Training Coordinator. In March 2013, Jon's exceptional paramedic skills were put to the test when a call was toned out for a seven-week old pediatric code. Jon arrived on scene of a child that was without a pulse and not breathing. He began CPR, defibrillated the patient and also established an IO line and administered medications. By the time he transferred care, the patient had a pulse and was breathing again. Today, that child is back at home with her parents and it appears that she will lead a life without complications from the event. After 11 years in the field, Jon's enthusiasm and compassion never fades. \*

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# Stars of Life

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**Markus Lincoln**  
*Medic Ambulance  
Service, Inc.*  
*Solano*

**Markus Lincoln**  
**EMT**

Markus has been serving in EMS for the last 10 years. Markus started his career right out of high school with the Vacaville Fire Protection District. His goal was to achieve a full time job in EMS. In 2005, Markus was hired at Medic Ambulance Service, Inc. as an EMT. To this day, he enjoys working on an ambulance and responding to all the various calls. Markus likes the constant change of EMS and how he always has to be “on his toes.” Markus says, “What really makes it all worth it is actually seeing the results of a job well done!” Markus lives at home with his girlfriend of four years, Jessie and their dog. In his free time, Markus is always with friends either barbequing, enjoying the outdoors at the lake, or taking Jeeps through the Rubicon Jeep Trail. Markus is being recognized for his rapid and excellent treatment of a six-year old cardiac arrest patient. The child went into sudden cardiac arrest and Markus and his partner administered immediate life-saving CPR and defibrillations, in which the patient regained his pulses. The child, now seven, is alive and well today because of Markus’ quick and life-saving treatment. ✨

**Brian McChristian**  
**Paramedic**

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# Stars of Life

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**Brian  
McChristian**  
*Hall Ambulance  
Service, Inc.*  
*Bakersfield*

Shawn Crocker and Brian McChristian were dispatched to a fast food chain for a cardiac arrest on February 11, 2013 at 1:00 pm. They arrived at the scene to find an unconscious woman receiving CPR by the Kern County Fire Department. Shawn assumed patient care and directed the team to establish a BLS airway while continuing CPR. After an ECG showed the patient to have no electrical activity, CPR was continued and an IV was started followed by ALS medications. The ECG changed to V-fib and the patient was defibrillated with a change to normal sinus rhythm. An ALS airway was attempted but the patient was biting down on the airway. The crew began transport and by the time they arrived at the hospital the patient was awake and alert and answering questions. The patient remains in the hospital and recently shared that she hopes to meet with the crew soon. ✨

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Monica McGrew**

*American  
Ambulance  
Fresno*

**Monica McGrew**  
**Paramedic**

Monica McGrew was selected by her peers as Paramedic of the Year 2012 for Kings County Operations. Paramedic Monica McGrew is a second generation EMS responder. She spent her childhood making trips to the fire station to visit her father, a retired Cal Fire Firefighter. Monica says she knew as a child that she wanted to follow her dad's footsteps and help others in an emergency. Monica served as a volunteer firefighter for seven years, spending one summer working for the National Forest Service. She started her EMS career as an EMT in Tulare County in 2001 and shortly after completed the EMT-II program. After becoming a paramedic in 2005, Monica began working at American Ambulance. She says, "I grew up in an agriculture community and I enjoy working for a company that keeps me connected to a rural setting, but also offers opportunity for advancement." She has taught ACLS and PALS and in July of 2011, Monica was promoted to Field Supervisor. Monica has a five-year old son, Alex. As a paramedic, Monica enjoys having an impact in people's lives, but the most important impact for her, is in her son's life. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Cameron Messer**

*Medic Ambulance  
Service, Inc.  
Solano County*

**Cameron Messer**  
**Dispatcher**

Cameron is 22 years old and has lived in Solano County all of his life. Since he was a young boy, Cameron always had a passion to help people. At the age of 16 he became a life guard at his local fitness club. Cameron enjoyed that people felt safe when he was around. Cameron's plan after high school was to become an Air Force pararescue jumper, but on February 7<sup>th</sup> 2008, Cameron was paralyzed in a motorcycle accident. Cameron knew he would not be able to physically help people, but he was eager to find a career in which he could obtain the same sense of satisfaction. Cameron found his calling in medical dispatching. Cameron was hired at Medic Ambulance Service, Inc. in the spring of 2011, and has been an inspiration to the whole Medic Family. He represents the best EMS has to offer. To Cameron, medical dispatch brings countless challenges to overcome. Cameron says, "The feeling I get at the end of the day is priceless." Cameron is EMD certified by the National Academies of Emergency Dispatch and recently attended the EMD quality assurance course to take a more active role in the Quality Assurance of Medic's EMD program. Cameron is being honored for his overall job performance as a dispatcher this last year. He has been a model employee and a mentor at Medic Ambulance. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Ken Sexton**

*Hall Ambulance  
Service, Inc.  
Bakersfield*

**Ken Sexton**  
**Paramedic**

Ken is a Paramedic assigned to the Boron station. The crews in Boron make regular visits to the Boron Senior Center and have, from time to time, engaged in extra activities to make the lives of the residents of Boron a little better. In July of 2012, Ken's father in law passed away. Ken and his wife knew there were some unmet needs in the community. Ken and his wife graciously donated his father in law's hearing aids worth more than \$3,000 to a community member. Ken and his wife's selfless act is a credit to him, and his family, and all EMS professionals. ✨

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Ray Shanahan**

*Care Ambulance  
Service, Inc.  
Orange*

**Ray Shanahan**  
**EMT**

Ray Shanahan was selected for the Star of Life award because of his dedication and outstanding leadership as an Operations Manager. Ray Shanahan joined Care in July 2009 and was promoted to Operations Manager in August 2012. Ray has served in a number of roles including Field Training Officer from 2009 to 2012. He also served as an FDNY Paramedic from 1986-1990 before pursuing a different career in sales. Ray worked for two Fortune 500 companies in a management capacity from 1991-2003 before successfully launching his own sales consulting firm. Ray sold his business in 2008 and returned to the EMS Field as an instructor before joining Care in July 2009. He has been married to his wife Elaina since 2011 and together they enjoy St. Louis Cardinals baseball. ✨

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Amy Shontz**  
*City Ambulance  
of Eureka*  
*Eureka*

**Amy Shontz**  
**Paramedic**

Last August, Amy Shontz and her partner responded to a 31-year old male who was impaled by a ¾ inch tree branch through his neck when a tree fell on him. Amy and her partner traveled 50 minutes into very rural Humboldt County and then Amy hiked down 200 feet into a deep ravine to access her patient. The awake and alert patient was found in the care of first responders who had already freed the patient from the main tree by cutting the branch, leaving an 8-10 inch section of the branch through his neck. Bleeding was controlled and the patient was placed in a modified c-spine with the remaining branch stabilized in place. Amy initiated ALS trauma care in the ravine while waiting for additional resources to assist in the patient's extrication back to the road. Amy then requested a medical helicopter for transport to a trauma center to avoid the nearly one hour drive back to the local hospital over a narrow, winding road. Once the patient was successfully removed from the ravine by Amy and first responders, he was flown to a trauma center where the branch was successfully removed without neurological impairment or permanent damage. Amy Shontz has been a paramedic for City Ambulance of Eureka, Inc. for 2 ½ years and has been the company's Community Service Coordinator for the past year. Amy is high energy and that trait is rewarded by a high call volume that surpassed all of her co-workers last year. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Robert Smith**  
*Riggs Ambulance  
Service*  
*Merced*

**Robert Smith**  
**Paramedic**

Paramedic Robert Smith has been nominated for the Star of Life Award for his commitment to high quality patient care at Riggs Ambulance Service over the last 12 years. Robert has continuously demonstrated dedication and leadership through his roles as Paramedic, Field Training Officer, Operations Supervisor and advisor to the Riggs Ambulance Service Medical Services Explorer Post 1948. Smith is an influential leader in EMS who stands out for his ability to inspire his peers. He is often recognized for his delivery of efficient and compassionate pre-hospital care for the people he serves in Merced County. Most importantly, he is gracious with his commitment to community by participating in various community service events on and off duty. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Chiyon  
Speakman**

**Medic Ambulance  
Service  
Solano**

**Chiyon Speakman**  
**RN**

Chiyon Speakman was born in South Korea, grew up in Japan and moved to California few years ago. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from Sonoma State University and has been a registered nurse since July of 2011. She says she chose to pursue a career in nursing because, "Nurses dedicate tremendous amounts of time, knowledge and service in an effort to produce the best patient outcomes and this is the exact charm of nursing that has motivated me." Working in the EMS field has allowed her to discover a new appreciation for the individuals working as first responders and heroes. As a transport nurse, she is proud to be a part of the EMS family and could not have asked for a better experience. She values the one-on-one time she gets to spend with her patients. Her dedication to this new field has shown in many aspects of her work. She is being recognized for her rapid and excellent care of cardiac patient who went into a ventricular tachycardia during transport. The patient had not been responding to medication while at the hospital and during the transport went into a lethal cardiac rhythm and Chiyon provided multiple cardio-versions during transport. Chiyon maintained excellent patient care and the patient was able to get to the Cardiac Cath Lab for immediate surgery. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Klatann Thomas**

**Care Ambulance  
Service, Inc.  
Orange**

**Klatann Thomas**  
**EMT**

Klatann Thomas was selected to receive the Star of Life award because of his outstanding leadership and skill set as a Field Training Officer and now, as an Operations Manager for Care Ambulance. Since deciding to re-commit to EMS in 2006, he has steadily taken on increasing levels of responsibility at Care Ambulance Service, Inc. Klatann is a product of the military where he served in U.S. Army Special Operations from 1988 to 2000. He attended UCLA for his pre-hospital care education where he taught for a number of years. He feels that this field offers new challenges and allows him to bring all his creativity, innovation and leadership daily. He has been happily married for 12 years and is a proud parent and grandparent. In his down time he enjoys watching movies, going to the gym and is an avid reader. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Jesse Torres**

**Mercy Medical  
Transportation,  
Inc.  
Escondido**

**Jesse Torres**  
**Paramedic**

Jesse Torres has been in the EMS field for more than a decade and has served seven of those years with Mercy Medical Transportation, Inc. There are certainly many reasons why Jesse was chosen for the Star of Life award. Simply, Jesse has always been tremendously supportive of the delivery service. Jesse has taken on many tasks that have been offered and handed to him for the betterment of the service and in turn, the overall betterment of patient care and customer service. Simply put, Jesse is all about the team; esprit de corps! Jesse is one who is always looking for ways and means to improve our delivery system from beginning to end. Jesse works hard and plays hard. In his free time, Jesse is a goalie for his soccer team. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Angelica  
Van Aalst**

**Care Ambulance  
Service, Inc.  
Orange**

**Angelica Van Aalst**  
**EMT**

Angelica Van Aalst was selected for the Star of Life award because she is a great example of Care Ambulance's core values. As a Field Training Officer she has committed herself to providing excellent patient care and is dedicated to teaching her trainees to do the same. Angelica has worked for Care Ambulance Service since April of 2006. Angelica has been in the EMS Industry for 15 years starting as a Fire Explorer for the Santa Fe Springs Fire Department when she was only 15 years old. Though she originally had a desire to become a firefighter, she quickly realized her calling as an EMS provider. She became an EMT and has never looked back. Angelica has been an EMT for 12 years and a Field Training Officer for 10 years. When she is not at work, she teaches CPR, AED and First Aid to the community, Foster Care Agencies and gives back to the Santa Fe Springs Fire Explorer Program where she also serves as an Associate Advisor. She has a passion for helping others to be successful and confident in their EMS Career. Angelica loves to spend time with her husband and daughter. They love to go hiking and biking and going for walks with their black lab, Harley. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**John  
Van Aalst**

**Care Ambulance  
Service, Inc.**  
**Orange**

**John Van Aalst**  
**EMT**

John Van Aalst was selected for the Star of Life award for his heroic rescue of an unresponsive infant as well as his deep dedication to serving his community. John has worked for Care Ambulance Service since May of 2006. He has been in the EMS industry for 20 years as an EMT. He has been a Field Training Officer for 12 of those 20 years. Aside from his love for aiding the sick and injured, John has a passion for helping others succeed. When he is not at work, John teaches CPR, AED and First Aid to the community through Fire Explorer Programs, Foster Care Agencies and anyone else interested in learning. John spends his free time hiking, biking and going on “outings” with his wife and daughter. He also loves to work on construction projects, and his 1965 mustang and Ford F250. John aspires to be a Firefighter/Paramedic. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Pamela Watson**  
**Medic Ambulance  
Service, Inc.**  
**Solano**

**Pamela Watson**  
**EMT**

Around the age of 10, Pam realized that she wanted nothing more than to have what she thought was the “coolest job ever” of working on an ambulance. Pam’s life has taken unexpected turns but she never let go of her dream. Seven years ago Pam had the opportunity to chase her dream and became an EMT; she then was hired at Medic Ambulance Service, Inc. Pam says she truly feels lucky and blessed to get up every morning and go to a job she loves. Pam says that even after six years on an ambulance, nothing can bring a smile to her face like the sound of sirens blaring and the rush of going on a call. Pam’s career goal is to become a paramedic. Pam is being honored as Medic Ambulance’s 2013 EMT of the Year. She also was awarded Medic Ambulance’s 2013 Travis Grace “Excellence in EMS” Award, and will receive a full tuition scholarship for Paramedic School at Napa Valley College. This is Pam’s second Star of Life Award. Last year, she and her partner were honored for the rapid and critical treatment of a cardiac patient. Pam loves enjoying the California weather, riding her bike, walking, hiking along the Yuba River and gathering with friends for barbecues. \*

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# Stars of Life

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**Brian White**

**Hall Ambulance  
Service, Inc.  
Bakersfield**

**Brian White**  
**Paramedic**

Paramedic Kent Frazier and EMT Brian White, both from Taft, have been partners since 2006. On the morning of June 22, 2012 at 5:30 am, Kent and Brian were dispatched to a residence in Taft for a cerebral vascular accident. They arrived to find a pulseless and apneic patient. With assistance from Kern County Firefighters, CPR was initiated while Kent and Brian prepared ALS equipment. The ECG indicated V-Fib. Kent defibrillated two times and saw the ECG rhythm convert to a normal sinus rhythm. Kent secured an ALS airway and started an IV. The patient was transported to the Taft airport and handed off to the medevac crew with a strong pulse and a good blood pressure. The patient made a full recovery and was discharged home only days after the event. \*

THE CALIFORNIA  
AMBULANCE  
ASSOCIATION  
CONGRATULATES  
THE 2013  
*Stars of Life!*



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