



CALIFORNIA AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION

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



MARCH 23, 2015  
EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL – SACRAMENTO, CA

HEALTH CARE'S ESSENTIAL FIRST RESPONDERS



# Stars of Life



**Richard Angotti**  
Chair, Board of Directors  
California Ambulance  
Association

**C**ongratulations to all of our 2015 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 American Legion Post #108 Ambulance, Bound Tree Medical, DerManouel Insurance Group, King American Ambulance, Medic Ambulance Service, Paramedics Plus and San Luis Ambulance.

Lastly, we are honored to have Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez and EMSA Director, Dr. Howard Backer 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, companies and communities you serve. 

## Stars of Life Awards Banquet — March 23, 2015 —

### **Welcome**

***Richard Angotti, Chair of the Board***

### **Guest Speaker**

***Howard Backer, MD, MPH, FACEP***

### **Guest Speaker**

***Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez***

### **Presentation of Stars of Life Recognition**

### **Closing Remarks**

# Thank You Sponsors!



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**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 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. 

**Freddie Rodriguez**  
**Assemblymember, 52<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District**



Born and raised in the City of Pomona, Freddie Rodriguez has dedicated his life to serving his community. He has worked as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) in the San Gabriel Valley


for over 29 years.

As an EMT, Freddie was awarded the California Star of Life award, for his outstanding community volunteer contributions and lifesaving rescues. In 2005, Freddie journeyed to Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas to help the victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Freddie was elected twice to the Pomona City Council. On the City Council, Freddie helped improve public safety, expanded Neighborhood Watch programs, created new jobs as a result of the economic development

projects he championed, and delivered balanced budgets while protecting city services during tough economic times. He led the effort to restore firefighting positions in Pomona, ensuring that each shift was fully staffed and that firefighters were properly equipped to respond to fire and emergency calls.

A leader in helping jumpstart the local economy, Freddie brought together community and business leaders to help revitalize downtown Pomona, generate new economic investment, and create new jobs.

Freddie lives in Pomona with his wife Michelle. They have four children, Desirae, Freddie Jr., Vincent, and Selena, and two grandchildren, Jayden and Jacob. Their son, Vincent, currently serves as a Deputy Sheriff for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. 

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Samuel Blesse**  
*Sierra Medical  
Services Alliance*  
*Susanville*

**Samuel Blesse**  
**Paramedic**

Sam is being honored for his thoughtfulness and compassion in caring for his patients, and especially for one patient in particular and that patient's wife. In Sam's own words:

"I remember that the elderly gentleman was very distracted about the fact that his yard had not been taken care of because of his increasing weakness. I have been doing this long enough to realize that as people age they get very focused on things like their yards. It is one of the last things that they can physically do. After dropping him off we went and found the wife in the waiting room and asked her if she would mind if we went back and took care of the yard. They were a very nice couple."

The yard was a little larger than first perceived, but it was taken care of. Sam and his partner Cody are now considering landscaping as another adventure.

Sam and his partner realized the importance of this simple act of kindness to the patient and his wife, and SEMSA wishes to give them special thanks for all they do every day. ✨

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Roger Brown**  
*Liberty  
Ambulance*  
*Ridgecrest*

**Roger Brown**  
**Paramedic**

Roger Brown is relatively new to EMS. After a career in construction, Roger Brown pursued a new adventure in EMS in 2009. Employed as a Paramedic by Liberty Ambulance in Kern County, Roger has quickly moved up the ladder to the position of crew chief. What sets Roger apart is his instinctive clinical skills that have resulted in an exceptional cardiac arrest save rate and multiple STEMI interactions with positive outcomes. Roger is assigned to Lake Isabella and its diverse environment with transports of critical patients routinely an hour or so. Roger's patient feedback summaries are always positive and Roger has quickly earned the position of Preceptor.

In paramedic school, Roger quickly demonstrated a natural knowledge of medicine and finished second in his class. During his internship at Liberty Ambulance it was clear that Roger possessed the tools necessary to provide quality care and was hired by Liberty Ambulance upon completion of his internship.

Roger is married and enjoys spending time with his family. ✨



**Jason Bryant**  
**Medic Ambulance  
Service, Inc.**  
**Solano**

**Jason Bryant**  
**EMT**

Jason has been working in EMS for over 12 years and has been with Medic Ambulance since 2002. Jason has learned that no two days or calls are alike, and it's one of the things he loves most about the job. Jason became involved with EMS because he enjoys helping people and wanted to help make a difference in someone's life. Going through school he tried many different areas of study and none seemed to feel right. When Jason decided to try out the medical field everything seemed to make perfect sense. He states, "What was taught to me just seemed to stay there come test time. Everything came so natural, so I just knew this was the path I would be heading down." He says he is always asked by friends and family what it's like and how he is able to do it. For Jason, the answer also comes very naturally to him, "This is my job, this is what I do, this is what I've been trained to do day in and day out." Jason credits his strong supportive network of family, friends, co-workers and employer to help him through his many years in this business. Jason states, "It's the most rewarding job I've ever had and I couldn't imagine doing anything else." Jason is being honored for his care of a 68 year old male who went into sudden cardiac arrest. The patient was complaint free at first contact, but due to the patient having chest pain earlier in the day, Jason and his partner were adamant about doing a detailed assessment. During assessment the patient became unresponsive, lost pulses and went into a lethal cardiac rhythm. Jason and his partner rendered immediate aid to this patient with CPR, and early defibrillation. After the CPR and the initial defibrillation, the patient regained his pulses and was found to be having a major cardiac event. In the ambulance, Jason's partner transmitted the ECG to the local Cardiac Center and upon their arrival at the hospital, the patient went for immediate cardiac surgery. Because of Jason and his partner's rapid and excellent care this patient is home and well and has made a complete recovery. Great job. Jason! ✨





**Jim Bugai**

**Medic Ambulance  
Service, Inc.**

**Solano**

**Jim Bugai**  
**Paramedic Supervisor**

Jim started his career in EMS in 1994. He was an explorer with a local fire department. He became an EMT and at the young age of 20 became a paramedic. Jim has been a paramedic for 14 years. He spent eight of those years as a flight medic for Reach Air Medical, serving in many quality roles for the organization. Jim currently works as a Paramedic Supervisor for Medic Ambulance in Solano County. Jim's favorite part of his role as a supervisor, is serving as a mentor and resource for his employees. Jim is married to his wife Katie and has three children Gavin, Jesse and Sophia. Jim is being honored for two extraordinary reasons. First being his rapid and immediate care to a three-year-old child who had a severe laceration to his neck during a domestic violence call. Jim was the first to render aid to the child, providing life-saving bleeding and airway control. Jim's care played a vital role in the child's ability to make it to the local hospital alive. The child was later flown by medical helicopter to a regional children's trauma center, where the child received more intensive care. Due to Jim's heroic actions the child was later released from the hospital and will make a full recovery. Jim also is being recognized for his role during the 2014 Napa earthquake. Medic's Solano County deployment center is located 5 miles from the earthquake's epicenter. The city of Vallejo had significant impact during and after the quake. As the on-duty supervisor, Jim composed himself with great class and leadership during a very difficult time. He coordinated the immediate callback of executive management staff, personnel, and helped get additional ambulances ready for deployment. He did all of this with the power completely out and minimal resources available to him. Because of Jim's leadership, Medic was able to respond to all requests for service during and after the quake without a late response. Jim coordinated a Task Force response of three ambulances, Medic's Disaster Medical Support Unit and a Supervisor unit to respond to the City of Napa for assistance. Great job, Jim! ✨

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# Stars of Life

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**Sheri Cashman**

*Schaefer  
Ambulance  
Pomona*

**Sheri Cashman**  
**Dispatcher**

Ms. Cashman has been working with Schaefer Ambulance Service for more than 13 years in our communication department often referred to as the com-center. Currently, she is working the swing shift, which is always fast paced and exciting. The com-center is responsible for approximately 40,000 responses annually. Sheri possesses the amazing ability to remain calm, cool and collected in stressful situations.

At times, employees who work in the com-center may feel like they are overlooked and unappreciated. We need to remember it is the individuals in the com-center that are responsible for sending the ambulances to those individuals who are in need of help. The com-center sends the closest, most appropriate EMTs and paramedics to the calls that assist the crews with rendering care.

We are honored to have her working with our company. As the lead for the swing shift, she is the first point of contact for fellow dispatch personnel, field crewmembers and members of management. She plays a pivotal role while in the communication center. Her first responsibility is to make sure each dispatcher is utilizing their resources to meet clients' expectations. Sheri monitors fellow dispatch personnel and offers assistance when needed.

Ms. Cashman's communication and critical thinking skills are second to none. When speaking with her, you will notice a soft, reassuring voice, which is a tremendous asset when faced with challenging times.

Members of management have a tremendous amount trust and admiration for the job she does. Sheri always has her finger on the pulse of operations and is ready for anything that comes her way.

Please join us, as it is our pleasure to honor Ms. Sheri Cashman with the Star of Life Award for 2015. ❁

# Stars of Life



**Justin Cloyd**

**Mercy Ambulance  
Mariposa**

## **Justin Cloyd Paramedic**

Justin is being awarded the Star of Life for his response to a single vehicle rollover down an embankment approximately 200 feet with a mother and her two children inside. The mom was driving northbound on Interstate 15 at approximately 75 mph when she was struck on the rear driver side by another vehicle which caused her to lose control and roll her SUV off the side of the freeway.

The ambulance was first on scene and light smoke was showing from the engine compartment. The mother was able to extricate herself and one child but the second child was trapped. Justin raced to the vehicle, cut the seatbelt, and safely removed a child. He helped the mom and children to the top of the hill. The hot summer weather and Santa Ana conditions caused a high gust of wind to pick up catching the surrounding vegetation on fire. The fire then took off up the hill in their direction. Fortunately, they were able to get to the top before the flames were blowing over the ridge and towards the ambulance.

Fire crews were on scene right when the fire erupted and were able to put hose on the ground and start fighting the wild land fire. Justin put the mom and kids in the ambulance while instructing others to evacuate the area for their safety so no one would be burned. The fire spread very rapidly. Without the quick extraction from the scene there would have definitely been burn victims or possibly worse!

Justin said "The heat of the fire on my face and neck was indescribable when it was blowing over the ridge towards us." The ambulance was driven to the next freeway exit just north of the scene to evaluate all 3 patients who were transported to the trauma hospital.

Justin has been with Mercy Ambulance for six years – four years as an EMT and two as a paramedic. Justin loves his job and although he understands the dangers that are faced, he is committed every day to do what has to be done in even the most difficult situations. He is an exemplary employee. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Edward Cordova**

*Hall Ambulance  
Service, Inc.  
Bakersfield*

**Edward Cordova**  
**Dispatcher**

Ed Cordova is a lead dispatcher with Hall Ambulance Service, Inc. Employed by the company since 2002, he is certified as an Advanced National Emergency Medical Dispatcher, Kern County Certified Emergency Medical Dispatcher and an emergency medical technician. In February, he was recognized as the Hall Ambulance EMD of the Year.

Cordova is being honored as a CAA Star of Life because of his dedication towards his career. He is able to demonstrate his acquired skills in a calm, compassionate manner, while focusing on a multitude of tasks. In 2014, Cordova processed over 5,157 calls for service, provided EMD instructions to over 684 requests for medical aid and dispatched over 5,000 calls – while maintaining 100% EMD compliance. ✨

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Micah Dayoan**

*Medic Ambulance  
Service, Inc.  
Solano*

**Micah Dayoan**  
**Paramedic**

Micah grew up in Napa where he was raised around Filipino and Puerto Rican cultures. Micah's whole family loves to cook and he, along with his father and brother used to run a Hawaiian style pig roasting company. Micah loves all sports and was a high school and collegiate wrestler. He first knew he wanted to be in EMS when he was 19 years old, when Micah's grandmother had fallen in the shower. At the time he had no training and had no idea what to do. Micah's grandmother meant everything to him. He states, "when the paramedics came to help, they treated her with such respect. It was amazing and made me realize that I wanted to treat and help someone else's family member the same way." Micah soon became an EMT in 2003 in Ventura County, graduated from Oxnard College in 2005, and spent five years as a firefighter with Cal Fire. Micah became a Paramedic in 2012, and shortly thereafter was hired by Medic Ambulance. Micah and his partner are being honored for the rapid and excellent care of a one-year-old choking victim. Micah found a one-year-old patient who was trying to cry but couldn't pass any air due to an airway obstruction. The patient was decompensating very quickly, and was near respiratory arrest. Micah immediately repositioned the airway, visualized the obstruction and, using the forceps, pulled a Crown Royal bottle cap out of the child's airway. The child regained color, started an audibly cry, and the child's vital signs began to stabilize. Due to their heroic care, the one-year-old is alive and well and will enjoy a very happy and healthy life. Great job, Micah! ✨

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## *Stars of Life*

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**William Dietz**  
*Hall Ambulance  
Service, Inc.*  
*Bakersfield*

**William Dietz**  
**EMT**

William “Bill” Dietz is an Emergency Medical Technician with Hall Ambulance assigned to an Advanced Life Support ambulance in the community of Lamont where he has served since January of 2013. He started his career with Hall Ambulance in September of 2011. Dietz was awarded a Hall Ambulance Star of Life during a ceremony in February of 2015.

On April 8, 2014 EMT Dietz was at Bakersfield Memorial Hospital cleaning his assigned ambulance after completing a call. His paramedic partner was inside the hospital. A car pulled onto the ambulance ramp with a woman in active labor. Bill immediately stepped in to help. He found a baby that was presenting in a breech delivery. Bill reached out and turned the baby allowing the baby to safely deliver into his arms. Arnold Thomas arrived at this point and took the baby from Bill, but Bill wasn’t done. He then coached mom through a normal delivery of baby number two.

Bill was nominated for his Star of Life by paramedic Arnold Thomas. Arnold wrote, “I would like to commend Mr. Dietz on going above and beyond. Mr. Dietz delivered a baby in the parking lot of Memorial hospital. By the time I arrived to help he already had the first baby out. He handed the baby off to me and I was able to stimulate the baby while Mr. Dietz was coaching the mom on delivering the second baby. Throughout the entire situation, Mr. Dietz, remained cool, calm, and collected. His BLS skills were above exemplary and led to the delivery of a healthy baby girl.” ❁

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Curtis Dunn**  
*American  
Ambulance*  
*Hanford*

**Curtis Dunn**  
**Paramedic**

Curtis came to American Ambulance in August of 2008 after completing his training at ETS in Santa Cruz. In 2012, Paramedic Dunn was an American Ambulance Star of Life award recipient for being selected by his peers in Fresno County as the Paramedic of the Year. Since then, Paramedic Dunn has continued to excel. He is now a Paramedic Preceptor, teaching new paramedics the tricks of the trade. Curtis says, “I love the one-on-one teaching. There is a great feeling when you see them learn and when they begin to get it.” He was also promoted to Field Supervisor in 2014 and provides leadership to Kings County Operations during the day to day shifts. His peers describe him as kind and non-judgmental in every situation. According to Paramedic Dunn, every shift is an opportunity to learn and his goal is to be a role model with everyone he comes into contact with. ❁



**Kimberly Hartke**

**Medic Ambulance  
Service, Inc.**

**Solano**

**Kimberly Hartke**  
**Dispatcher**

Kimberly is the loving mother of three beautiful daughters with her fourth on the way this summer and the wife to an amazing man who she has spent the last ten years sharing her life with. With the loss of her grandfather to lung cancer and her grandmother battling cancer, Kimberly spends as much time as she can enjoying the company of her family and friends. Kimberly grew up being multicultural and is tri-lingual in English, Spanish and American Sign Language. She is instilling these values of culture and communication in her children as well. In her free time Kimberly enjoys reading and crafting. Kimberly has been a dispatcher for Medic Ambulance in Solano County, California for just seven short months. In her first week of full time dispatching, the Vallejo/Napa earthquake struck. In addition to handling the shaking building, Kimberly had to think quickly on her feet due to a complete power failure. Tasks got divided between her and her partner to ensure all tasks were completed during the time of crisis in a timely and professional manner. Kimberly and her partner immediately implemented the back-up phones to ensure all communication was maintained with all crews and Primary PSAPs. Due to Kimberly and her partner's heroic efforts, no calls were lost, and all communications were maintained, ensuring ambulances and resources were readily available! Great job Kimberly! ✨

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## Stars of Life

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**Cliff Henderson**  
**Medic Ambulance  
Service, Inc.**  
**Solano**

### **Cliff Henderson** **Paramedic**

Cliff is the exemplary model of a home-grown, made-in-Solano-County success story. Cliff was born and raised in Benicia, CA, which he still calls home today. EMS has always caught Cliff's interest. He went to EMT school at Solano College, and applied for the local ambulance service, Medic Ambulance, where he quickly became part of the family. Cliff put his time and effort into becoming the best EMT he could be and when it was time he knew he was ready to take the challenge of becoming a paramedic. Cliff not only has passed that challenge but led the way for others. Cliff is now finishing his seventh year as a paramedic at Medic Ambulance. He is a Field Training Officer, county preceptor, and the Chair of Medic Ambulance's Internal Quality Improvement Committee. Cliff was selected as one of 6 Paramedics in Solano County to take part in Medic's Community Paramedic Pilot, which focuses on post hospital care and readmission prevention for COPD and CHF patients. Out of 30,000 licensed paramedics in the State of California, only 84 paramedics are in the pilot program, and Cliff is one of these select few. Cliff always takes the time to instruct, improve and create a better environment for others. Whether it is a paramedic student or a new employee, Cliff is always there to lend a helping hand. Cliff's commitment to excellence shows in everything he does, and thus has been selected for the second year in a row as Medic Ambulance's 2015 Paramedic of the Year. Cliff will be rewarded by management with an all-expenses paid trip to Denver, Colorado to attend the ZOLL National EMS Summit. In Cliff's free time he loves spending time outdoors and with his son CJ! Great job, Cliff! \*

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## Stars of Life

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**Adam Hibdon**  
**Riggs Ambulance  
Service**  
**Merced**

### **Adam Hibdon** **Paramedic**

Adam Hibdon, a paramedic at Riggs Ambulance Service, is being recognized as a Star of Life for his outstanding patient care and dedication to emergency medical services. Adam has been a paramedic for six years. He has been a model service provider focused on patient care and support to the whole EMS system in Merced County. He demonstrates this through his participation as a TEMS medic and most recently, as a newly appointed Flight Paramedic for Riggs Air 1. Adam consistently performs in a cool and competent manner in every situation. No matter how challenging a situation is, high quality patient care is the focus point of Adam's work flow. He brings an air of lightness and control to a very demanding service industry. He is thoughtful and respectful to anyone he comes in contact with. Adam is a leader in our EMS community and we are proud to honor him with the Star of Life award. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Michelle  
Kasfeldt**

*San Luis  
Ambulance  
Paso Robles*

**Michelle Kasfeldt**  
**Paramedic**

Throughout Michelle's 12 years with San Luis Ambulance, she has demonstrated excellence in all aspects of working as an EMT, paramedic and trainer. Her superior paramedic skills and ability to mentor other paramedics/EMT's has been key to her success in her role as a company training officer as well as a field paramedic.

In addition to her paramedic and training duties, she has taken on the role of leading the company's Volunteer Explorers Program. She is doing a great job at working with the teenage members of the group to improve their skills and develop their interest in Emergency Medical Services as a career. Also, she has performed at such a high level that recently she was promoted to manage one of our response stations.

Michelle is a true asset to San Luis Ambulance and was recently recognized for her contributions by being selected as the San Luis Ambulance Employee of the Year for 2014. ✨

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Andrew Kiser**

*Hall Ambulance  
Service, Inc.  
Bakersfield*

**Andrew Kiser**  
**Paramedic**

Andrew Kiser is a paramedic for Hall Ambulance assigned to an Advanced Life Support Ambulance at Hall's Rosamond California substation. Kiser started his career at Hall Ambulance in February of 2009 and transferred to the Rosamond station in November of 2010.

Paramedic Kiser was awarded the 2014 Hall Ambulance President's Award for Customer Service during an awards ceremony in February of 2015. The President's Award is the highest honor a Paramedic can receive at Hall Ambulance and represents a continuous commitment to customer satisfaction and service. It is awarded to the EMT, Paramedic or Registered Nurse that receives the highest customer satisfaction rating.

Each year, the recipient of the President's Award for Customer service is nominated for a California Ambulance Association Star of Life. ✨





## **Richard Kyle**

**Liberty  
Ambulance  
Ridgecrest**

### **Richard Kyle Paramedic**

Rick Kyle is employed by Liberty Ambulance of Kern County as a Paramedic/Preceptor. Rick Kyle began his career as an EMT in 1987 and completed paramedic training in 1989. Rick Kyle is a senior paramedic in the Kern County EMS System and has trained dozens of paramedic interns. Two of Rick's paramedic interns later were named Kern County Paramedic of the Year.

Rick's desire to enhance the quality of patient care in Kern County has been demonstrated by his willingness to formulate and manage internal training programs at Liberty Ambulance and train new employees. Rick was instrumental in developing implementation programs for 12-lead EKG, King Airway, CPAP therapy and STEMI recognition care and treatment.

During his career at Liberty Ambulance, Rick has held multiple positions such as Field Supervisor, Training Director and Operations Supervisor. As a Field Supervisor Rick implemented daily training schedules related to quality assurance findings that raised the clinical bar and performance on his shifts.

Rick is married to his wife Shirley Kyle. Rick has two step children who have followed Rick into the field of medicine. His daughter Angela is an RN who is currently completing her Masters Program and his son Charles who is also a Paramedic/Preceptor at Liberty Ambulance. Charles was the Kern County Paramedic of the Year in 2009.

In his free time, Rick enjoys watching the Atlanta Braves, fishing and target shooting. \*



**Armando Lazaro**  
*Hall Ambulance  
Service, Inc.  
Bakersfield*

**Armando Lazaro**  
**Relief Supervisor**

Armando Lazaro is a paramedic relief supervisor for Hall Ambulance Service, Inc. He started his career in emergency medical services as a graduate of the Hall EMT Academy, in 2007, and attended paramedic school in 2009. Lazaro was promoted to relief supervisor in the spring of 2014.

On the evening of November 15, 2014, Lazaro was returning a firefighter to station, which had assisted during a transport from Taft to a Bakersfield-area hospital. That is when, in an instant, things changed dramatically.

A drunk driver headed north on Highway 119, crossed the centerline, sideswiping another car, and then collided, nearly head-on with the Hall Ambulance Paramedic Supervisor Unit. The first responder vehicle careened off the roadway, rolling multiple times before coming to rest upside down.

With seatbelts fastened and air bags deployed, Lazaro self-extricated from the vehicle, crawling to safety. With certain calmness to his voice, Lazaro made radio contact to Hall Ambulance’s Communications Center to report having been involved in the crash. Irrespective of his own injuries, he began the process of treating the other victims.

It was not clear until much later, that Paramedic Lazaro realized how severe the extent of his injuries were – suddenly finding himself transitioning from rescuer, to becoming a patient. He was hospitalized and required surgery to repair a compound fracture to his elbow. \*

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# Stars of Life

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**Tim Mieir**

**Medic Ambulance  
Service, Inc.**

**Solano**

## **Tim Meier**

### **Lead Dispatcher**

Tim was born in May of 1988 in Fairfield, CA, and grew up in Vacaville, CA. Tim graduated from Vacaville High School in 2006. Tim always had a calling for the dispatching field, and knew that is what he wanted to do. In 2007, he received his EMD certification, and began his career in EMS. In April of 2008, and he was hired by Medic Ambulance Service as a dispatcher, and he has worked there ever since. Tim is a recent newlywed, and now lives in Sacramento with his wife Rachel, and is looking forward to beginning the next chapters of his life. Tim is being recognized for his role during the 2014 Napa earthquake. Medic's Solano County deployment center is located 5 miles from the Napa earthquakes epicenter. The city of Vallejo had significant impact during and after the quake. The Dispatch Center lost all power during the quake, and due to Tim's leadership and process management skills he was able to enact all the emergency operating procedures. Tim and his partner immediately implemented the back-up phones to ensure all communication was maintained with all crews and Primary PSAPs. Due to Tim and his partner's heroic efforts no calls were lost, and all communications were maintained, ensuring ambulances and resources were readily available! Great job, Tim! \*

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# Stars of Life

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**Tyler Morse**

**Medic Ambulance  
Service, Inc.**

**Solano**

## **Tyler Morse**

### **Paramedic**

Tyler is 32 years old, married and has two dogs. He grew up in North Lake Tahoe. Tyler has been in EMS for ten years, first beginning as an EMT in Orange County in 2005. Tyler went to paramedic school in 2009 at Truckee Meadows Community College, in Reno, Nevada. Tyler accepted his first paramedic job at Hall Ambulance in Bakersfield. Needing to relocate to the bay area, Tyler applied to work for Medic Ambulance, where he was hired as a paramedic in 2013. Tyler is being honored for his care of 68 year old male who went into sudden cardiac arrest. The patient was complaint free at first contact, but due to the patient having chest pain earlier in day, Tyler and his partner were adamant about doing a detailed assessment. During assessment, the patient became unresponsive, lost pulses and went into a lethal cardiac rhythm. Tyler and his partner rendered immediate aid to this patient with CPR, and early defibrillation. After the CPR and the initial defibrillation, the patient regained his pulses and was found to be having a major cardiac event. In the ambulance, Tyler and his partner transmitted the ECG to the local Cardiac Center and upon their arrival at the hospital the patient went for immediate cardiac surgery. Because of Tyler and his partner's rapid and excellent care this patient is home and well and has made a complete recovery. Great job, Tyler! \*

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# Stars of Life

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**Walter Pesantes**

*Schaefer  
Ambulance  
Los Angeles*

**Walter Pesantes**  
**Dispatcher**

Mr. Pesantes has been working with Schaefer Ambulance for eight years come this April. During his tenure with the company Walter has worked in the field as an EMT ambulance operator and in the supplies and communications departments.

Walter is being nominated for the Star of Life Award for his commitment to the community in which he serves and his willingness to take on various responsibilities as assigned by the company. One of Walters's favorite phrases is, "Whatever the company needs." That type of dedication and willingness is a rarity in today's work force.

The following demonstrates Mr. Pesantes' commitment to public safety. At approximately 2120 hours on July 4, 2013 at Rancho Santa Susana Community Park in Simi Valley, Mr. Pesantes was with family and friends preparing to watch the fire works display. A couple of minutes into the show, a technical malfunction occurred and caused the fireworks display to deploy into the crowd.

Walter instructed his family and friends to return to the house across the street from the park. While fireworks continued to deploy, Walter was able to locate the Command Post and offer his assistance. While working with local EMS professionals on duty and off, they were successful in setting up a triage center and triaging the patients. He also participated in loading patients into ambulances and assisting minor patients to their private automobiles. The patients were delivered to the medical centers without further incidents.

There are numerous situations where Walter has played a pivotal part in rendering care to the sick and injured. As a dispatcher he has the responsibility of sending the most appropriate ambulance to an incident. It is this type of courageous dedication to the community as well as his commitment to the company that he deserves this recognition. \*

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## Stars of Life

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**Tyler Rosser**

**McCormick  
Ambulance  
Hawthorne**

**Tyler Rosser**  
**EMT**

EMT Tyler Rosser saved the same man on two occasions while he was off the job. About a year ago, he was off-duty at a baseball field when a man suddenly collapsed. He rushed to the Snack Shack, grabbed the AED, ran to the man's side, started CPR, and applied the AED which automatically shocked the patient. Within seconds, the patient regained a pulse and began breathing on his own. Several months later, the *same man* collapsed again at the *same baseball field* and Tyler Rosser happened to be there off-duty and responded in the *same manner*. The man was taken to the hospital both times and survived to tell the story today. Tyler, a very humble person, responded, "Not just once, but for someone to come back twice, I just feel blessed to have that opportunity to be able to make an impact like that." Tyler has been with McCormick Ambulance for eight years since he became an EMT. He is Crew Chief, a Field Training Office and Associate Supervisor. His career goal is to become a firefighter somewhere in California. His passions include his family, friends and sports. He manages the McCormick Ambulance softball team. He is married to Vanessa and they have two small children. ✨

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## Stars of Life

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**Wayne Scoles**

**Medic Ambulance  
Service, Inc.  
Solano**

**Wayne Scoles**  
**EMT**

Wayne Scoles was born in Laguna Beach, CA and grew up there until age 13 when his family moved to Grass Valley, CA. While living and going to school in Grass Valley, Wayne worked as a cook in restaurants and enjoyed the recreational activities. Wayne started volunteering for the Ophir Hill Fire Department and soon was hired as a seasonal firefighter. After being at Ophir Hill Fire Department for two years, he applied at Medic Ambulance, Sacramento and was hired in 2003. He was very interested in working in EMS, and was curious if this would be a good career path for him. After about a year, he was hooked on EMS. He transferred to the Solano Division in 2004, where he currently is today. Wayne states, "I have enjoyed working at Medic Ambulance and am proud and grateful of the people I work with." Wayne is being honored as Medic Ambulance's 2015 EMT of the Year. Wayne has been a model employee at Medic Ambulance, as he has served in many helpful roles throughout the year for us. Wayne also was awarded Medic Ambulance's 2015 Travis Grace "Excellence in EMS" Award, and will receive a full tuition scholarship for Paramedic School to Napa Valley College. Wayne currently resides in Vacaville, CA with his wife Jamie, 4 year old daughter Ashley, and one-year-old son, Tyler. He enjoys many outdoor activities and spending time with family. Great job, Wayne! ✨



**Richard  
Selander**  
*West Side  
Ambulance  
Patterson*

**Richard Selander**  
**Paramedic**

Richard became an EMT in 1987, a paramedic in 1990, and has worked for the city and rural ambulance providers. Richard also served as a flight medic, and volunteered his services for various community activities and trainings. Richard has been with Westside Community Health Care District for 27 years and is a committed and valued employee.

Rich was nominated because he is the ambassador of West Side Ambulance. He has served this rural community for 28 years. There is no place in this community that you can go to with a West Side jacket on without hearing, "Oh, you work with Richard Selander."

Richard is the model employee any company would love to hire because 28 years ago when he put on the green West Side shirt he decided to make a career at the place where he started at.

Richard and his family have a long standing tie to the community and he has dedicated his life to be the best paramedic to the community and to West Side Ambulance. Richard is known and loved by the community he serves. \*

# Stars of Life



## **Myron Smith**

**Hall Ambulance  
Service, Inc.**

**Bakersfield**

## **Myron Smith**

### **Manager, CCT Operations**

Myron Smith, Jr., is the manager of Hall Critical Care Transport. Hall CCT is the air and ground critical care arm of Hall Ambulance Service, Inc. Smith is a third generation EMS worker. His grandfather volunteered on an ambulance in Wasco, California, and his father owned Taft Ambulance. He completed his first EMS call while he was still in elementary school by stowing away on a call with his mom and dad.

Smith would eventually become an EMT and then a paramedic.

In 1995, his parents sold Taft Ambulance to Harvey L. Hall, founder and President of Hall Ambulance Service. Smith transferred to Hall Ambulance, where he progressed his career promoting to paramedic field supervisor in 1998, and manager of Hall Critical Care Transportation in 2001.

Smith has been nominated for a Star of Life in recognition of the many EMS lives he has touched through his dedication to EMS education. Smith has served as the volunteer program director for the Bakersfield College Paramedic Training Program, since 2005. The program graduates two classes each year. He has established Hall Ambulance as a leader in EMS education as he oversees and acts as lead instructor and faculty of record for Hall Ambulance's many training programs which include Advanced Cardiac Life Support, Pediatric Advanced Life Support, Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support, Advanced Medical Life Support, CPR, and the Hall Ambulance EMT Academy.

Smith serves on several EMS boards and committees. He serves as the California Ambulance Association member to the State Trauma Evaluation Committee; he represents Hall CCT at the Association of Air Medical Services, California Association of Air Medical Services (CalAAMS), Helicopter Association International, International Association of Flight Paramedics, National Association of EMS Educators, and the California Paramedic Program Directors Association. Smith earned his Bachelors in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix in 2002, his Master's in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix in 2005 and is currently working on his Master of Teaching and Curriculum from Fresno Pacific University.

His community work includes serving as a Wish Grantor for Make A Wish Central California; past president, Kiwanis Club of Taft; former board member, Bakersfield Swim Club; former treasurer, House of Delegates for USA Swimming - Central California; past secretary, Kern County Ambulance Association; past coordinator, Bakersfield Christmas Parade; past board member, Central California Team Penning Association; and past vice president, Bakersfield Breakfast Lions. ❁

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Makenzie  
Stevens**

*Hall Ambulance  
Service, Inc.  
Bakersfield*

**Makenzie Stevens**  
**CCT RN**

Makenzie Stevens is a flight nurse assigned to Hall Critical Care Transport's MedEvac 1 helicopter. Many flight nurses experience their first helicopter ride through a job interest ride-along or during new hire orientation. That was not the case for Stevens. Her first helicopter ride came in quite a different fashion. It is also what inspired her to become a flight nurse. At 17 years old and a month away from graduating high school, Stevens was critically injured in a motor vehicle accident. She was transported by helicopter to a Bakersfield area hospital and later transferred to a rehabilitation center. Coincidentally, the initial air medical crew responded from the very station she now works. Despite multiple years of a grueling recovery process, this experience instilled a drive and passion for her to help others how she was once helped.

In 2004, Stevens completed the first step of her dream of becoming a flight nurse by completing nursing school. This was no easy task in the beginning. She failed some of her first classes and was told her injuries would never allow for her to become a nurse. She would spend the next six years working in local hospital emergency rooms gathering the much needed experience to become a flight nurse. In 2010, Stevens made the move to Hall Critical Care Transport, and became a full-time Flight Nurse on MedEvac 1 in February 2011. Over the past four years, Stevens has developed a confident and independent skill set that is essential for a flight nurse. In 2014, she was instrumental in mentoring new flight nurses and paramedics. She also worked numerous overtime shifts that were needed to cover vacant shifts all the while not missing a day of work for more than three years. Stevens has proven that she is a valuable team member to Hall Critical Care Transport and that you can accomplish anything that you set your mind to. \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Christina Stoops**  
*Riggs Ambulance  
Merced*

**Christina Stoops**  
**EMT**

Christina Stoops, Riggs Ambulance Service Emergency Medical Technician, has been a vital part of the operations team in Merced County for the last three years. To her peers, she is one of the most considerate and kind co-workers that many people have had the pleasure of working with. Christina is detail orientated while ensuring the highest quality of patient care and comfort. She works quietly but efficiently in providing reassurance and support to all of her patients, no matter the circumstances of the call. Christina is a Star of Life for her compassion, her dedication and her professionalism at all times. \*



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## *Stars of Life*

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**Lori Valdovinos**

*West Side  
Ambulance*

*Newman*

**Lori Valdovinos**

**EMT**

Lori worked for Patterson Ambulance for three years. Lori was nominated because she is the one employee you can always count on. Lori helps with anything you ask her to do in regards to running the day-to-day activities of West Side Ambulance. She always replies with a yes and a smile, when things are asked of her.

In addition to helping with the day-to-day operations at West Side, Lori is always willing to help with any type of volunteer function that is being held at West Side.

Lori grew up in the EMS world. Her father is in the field and her sister is a nurse. Lori knows what it is like to give and give up in this career. She is caring and willing to give back to her community. Lori represents what a rural ambulance like West Side Ambulance is all about, giving back! \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Robert Wankel**

*American  
Ambulance*

*Fresno*

**Robert Wankel**

**Paramedic**

Paramedic Wankel started his paramedic career at American Ambulance in 2005 after completing his training. Since then, he has been an active paramedic serving the community of Fresno and its surrounding areas. Robert is also a Paramedic Preceptor and oversees the development of new paramedic students during their internship. Active in education, he is a certified instructor and teaches Advanced Cardiac Life Support, Pediatric Advanced Life Support, and Basic Life Support for American Ambulance. Robert's experience and desire to help others learn makes him a great addition to our educational staff. Paramedic Wankel loves being part of the American Ambulance team. His coworkers are not only close friends, but are family. According to Paramedic Wankel, "Being a paramedic isn't meant for everyone, but for those who truly care about people, this job is meant for them."

Paramedic Wankel recently purchased a beautiful older home in Old Fig Garden, which keeps him very busy. Paramedic Wankel loves to escape with his partner, spending time hiking, at the beach and camping. "It's a great place to refresh and find peace and tranquility with my family and friends." \*

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Annika Welcker**  
**Medic Ambulance  
Service, Inc.**  
**Solano**

**Annika Welcker**  
**EMT**

Annika became an EMT in 2013, as she was pursuing her education in nursing. Annika has been an EMT with Medic Ambulance, Solano County, for almost two years. Annika and her partner are being honored for the rapid and excellent care of a one-year-old choking victim. They found a one-year-old patient who was trying to cry but couldn't pass any air due to an airway obstruction. The patient was decompensating very quickly, and was near respiratory arrest. Annika assisted her partner with patient care and was extremely helpful in getting the required airway equipment ready. Her partner was able to pull a Crown Royal bottle cap out of the child's airway. The child regained color, started an audibly cry, and the child's vital signs began to stabilize. Due to their heroic care the one-year-old is alive and well and will enjoy a very happy and healthy life. Great job, Annika! ❁

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## *Stars of Life*

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**Jane Williams**  
**Sierra Ambulance  
Service, Inc.**  
**Oakhurst**

**Jane Williams**  
**Paramedic**

Jane is our longest serving caregiver with 27 years of service at Sierra Ambulance. She started as a paid call volunteer EMT back in 1988 and she earned her paramedic license in 1993. Over the years she has worked in almost every facet of the job including CPR instructor, training officer, supply officer, field supervisor and paramedic preceptor. What sets Jane apart is not just the number of activities she has involved herself with, but the enthusiasm she brings to everything she does. She is compassionate and empathetic. She makes every patient feel like they are the most important person in the world when she is caring for them. Jane is a true professional doing her very best and treating her patients with kindness at all hours of the day and night in all types of weather. ❁

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# Stars of Life

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**Tom Williams**

**Sierra Ambulance  
Service, Inc.  
Oakhurst**

**Tom Williams**  
**EMT**

Tom has been an EMT with Sierra Ambulance for 21 years. During most of those years he has been our most faithful paid call volunteer. He worked for a local business that supported his involvement with Sierra Ambulance and with the local volunteer fire department. When the pager went off, whether fire or EMS, or both in most cases, Tom would clock out and respond. He has done this year in and year out. He's retired from his day job but is still very active with Sierra Ambulance. Tom is the go-to guy when short notice EMT coverage is needed. Tom, like Jane, his wife, puts others first. He cares deeply about his duty to respond and his duty to provide his best effort always. Sierra is blessed to have this amazing husband and wife as a part of our team. ✨

THE CALIFORNIA  
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THE 2015  
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