



From the Fire Chief

Dear OCFA Family:

While the below 2023 OCFA Holiday Video memorably begins with us giving Bad Santa a handful of holiday safety tips (and him giving us an earful of explosives), for me, it is the video's final, un-beeeped line that resonates most: "In Service of Others."

Indeed, every time I hear Firefighter/Paramedic Dylan Urbe conclude by singing those four words, a smile washes over my face as I think of all of you, the 1,200 firefighters and 400 staff who elevate that aphorism far beyond a simple tagline.

To be clear, every bit of the "Rockin' Around the OCFA" holiday parody that FFIPM Urbe sings is true: We do put two paramedics to the side of a patient as fast as anyone in the nation, we are an all-hazard agency with everything from Hand Crews and Air Operations to Heavy Rescue and Hazardous Material Teams; we do respond to 3,500 calls for service per week while running major incidents in our county and beyond.

Yet despite these and so many other OCFA points of pride (lyrical or otherwise), they are not the main reason Hans Gruber, the Home Alone Nom, and most importantly, the region we serve see us as the best agency in the state. No, the origin for that praise lies not in the excellence, volume, and breadth of what we do, but rather the spirit, passion, and selflessness with which we do it — tenets that are encapsulated in that final, harmonized line of our 2023 holiday video: "In Service of Others."

As if that weren't enough, your year-round work to breathe life into that phrase only elevates during the holidays.

Case in point, after nearly 200,000 calls for service in 2023, all of you — our dedicated firefighters and professional staff — approached the year's end not by seeking well-earned rest, but by volunteering to support our Spark of Love Toy Drive, preparing meals for older adults, hanging holiday lights in our communities, and of course, responding to the uptick in emergencies that stem from the additional hazards the holidays bring.

With all that in mind, I want to pause to thank you for continuously evolving and improving.

In the best interest of our communities. In good and challenging times. In new and innovative ways.

And as always, "In Service of Others."

It is one of life's greatest honors to serve with you, and I wish you and your loved ones a safe, warm, and relaxing holiday season.

Sincerely,

Brian Fennessy
Fire Chief

MONTHLY SPOTLIGHT - EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

2023 OCFA Holiday Video

Chief Fennessy, Assistant Chief Holloman, Captain Dillon, the crew of 62s, and Bad Santa can't think of a way to top last year's holiday video... until FF-IPM Dylan Urbe wanders in with a guitar and a new OCFA Holiday classic.



Firefighters see raw tragedy while helping us — who helps them?

For years, the culture within many fire departments was one of silence when it came to the topic of mental health.

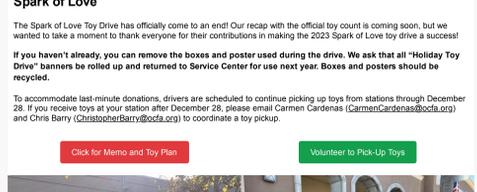


OCFA Fire Captain and Senior Peer Support Team Lead Brett Cowdell recently appeared on the cover of the Sunday edition of the Orange County Register to further amplify the important work that he, the peer support program, CFI, our fire chaplains, Local 3631, and so many others are doing to improve mental and behavioral health within the agency.

[Click to Read Article](#)

Ask the Chief - December 2023

In this month's Ask the Chief, Chief Fennessy and Captain/PIO Brett Cowdell sit down to discuss mental & behavioral health services, staffing, the Pacentro fire service model, special area maps, Fire Station 12, and more. Click the thumbnail to watch!



Spark of Love

The Spark of Love Toy Drive has officially come to an end! Our recap with the official toy count is coming soon, but we wanted to take a moment to thank everyone for their contributions in making the 2023 Spark of Love toy drive a success!

If you haven't already, you can remove the boxes and poster used during the drive. We ask that all "Holiday Toy Drive" banners be rolled up and returned to Service Center for use next year. Boxes and posters should be recycled.

To accommodate last-minute donations, drivers are scheduled to continue picking up toys from stations through December 28. If you receive toys at your station after December 28, please email Carmen Cardenas (CarmenCardenas@ocfa.org) and Chris Barry (ChrisBarry@ocfa.org) to coordinate a toy pickup.

[Click for Memo and Toy Plan](#)

[Volunteer to Pick-Up Toys](#)



ABC7 News Report | New HeloPod in San Juan Capistrano

On December 15, the OCFA unveiled a new HeloPod in partnership with the OC Board of Supervisors, Quest Diagnostics, and the Santa Margarita Water District. Located in San Juan Capistrano, the HeloPod addresses a long-standing need for a water source in the Ortega corridor. Click the thumbnail below for the aerial showcase of the new HeloPod!



Academy 58 Graduation

On Wednesday, December 6, Academy 58 celebrated their academy graduation with loved ones and OCFA personnel. Click the thumbnail below to see the recap video of the memorable and well-deserved celebration.



Quick Reaction Force - ABC7 Report

ABC7 recently highlighted the QRF and OCFA's pivotal role in creating and expanding the program to year-round. Click the thumbnail below to watch the news story or the button to read the article.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Over the past month OCFA's social media platforms had:

- Over 4.4 million impressions (eyes on our content)
- 258,565 engagements (interaction with our content)
- 2,100 link clicks/redirects
- 4,045 new followers

Despite this social media success, we are always looking to improve and share information of interest with each other and the communities we serve. To that end, there is now a new area on the HIVE for all OCFA personnel (safety and non-safety) to submit photos, videos, and story ideas for OCFA's social media accounts and other information-sharing platforms.

[Click to Submit Photos/Videos](#)



Top Social Media Posts

Vehicle in Water in Irvine

Firefighters were called at 9:58 p.m. on November 23rd for a reported vehicle in the water at the intersection of E Yale Loop & W Yale Loop in Irvine. After conducting a thorough search utilizing our swift water team, helicopter, and ground resources in partnership with Irvine Police and Huntington Beach PD's helicopter, we were able to locate and extract the vehicle. Sadly, one individual, an adult female, was confirmed deceased inside the vehicle.



[Click For Social Media Post](#)

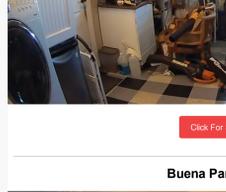
Garden Grove Lithium-Ion Battery Fire

Firefighters responded to the 6600 block of Santa Barbara Ave in Garden Grove on November 25th for a fire in a garage. Engine 84 found smoke showing on their arrival. Crews quickly searched the home while attacking the fire and preventing it from extending into the house. No injuries were reported. Thanks to home video, fire investigators determined the cause to be accidental from an unspecified failure of a lithium-ion battery charger. We strongly encourage everyone to never charge a battery and leave it unattended, and do not leave it in your exit path.



[Click For Social Media Post](#)

Buena Park Barn Burner



👉 A Real Barn Burner 👈
On November 23rd crews in Buena Park arrived on-scene of a 2 story vacant barn well involved with fire.

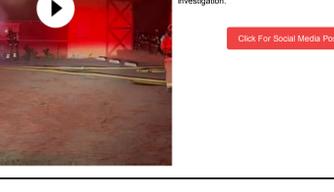
Firefighters utilized a defensive strategy to protect exposures and provide for firefighter safety.

Ultimately, the fire went 2 alarms. Fortunately, there were no injuries to firefighters or civilians. The cause is under investigation.

[Click For Social Media Post](#)

Equity, Inclusion, Outreach, and Recruitment

FAE Candice Acosta and Senior Accounting Specialist Shafali Grewal sparked inspiration at Montclair High School's ELLA (Empowering Leadership in Latina Athletes) event, empowering the next generation of women in the fire service.



[Click Here for Social Media Post](#)

Orange County Fire Authority In the News

- Crime and Public Safety | 2 people killed in Tustin after high-speed...**
The Orange County Register - Nov 6, 2023
- Fiery crash in Orange County claims 2 lives**
Yahoo! News - Nov 6, 2023
- Fire Destroys World War II Era Blimp Hangar in California**
The New York Times - Nov 7, 2023
- Massive World War II-era blimp hangar burns in Southern California**
MSN.com - Nov 7, 2023
- Fire rips through historic blimp hangar seen in 'Star Trek.' California officials say**
Yahoo! News - Nov 7, 2023
- News | Fire destroys massive, historic north hangar at...**
The Orange County Register - Nov 7, 2023
- Historic hangar at Marine Corps Air Station Tustin partially collapses after massive fire**
USA Today - Nov 7, 2023
- Cause of Mysterious Tustin Hangar Fire Under Investigation | Entrepreneur**
Entrepreneur - Nov 8, 2023
- Crime and Public Safety | Firefighters continue to monitor Tustin hangar...**
The Orange County Register - Nov 8, 2023
- Crime and Public Safety | With expected Santa Ana winds, firefighters...**
The Orange County Register - Nov 8, 2023
- Local News | Asbestos from Tustin hangar fire triggers...**
The Orange County Register - Nov 9, 2023
- Tustin schools close after asbestos is found in ash from large World War II hangar fire**
Los Angeles Times - Nov 9, 2023
- Local News | What happens next with the burned-out Tustin...**
The Orange County Register - Nov 9, 2023
- State Of Emergency Declared After Tustin Hangar Fire**
LAist - Nov 9, 2023
- Crime and Public Safety | Flame-up seen Saturday after fire at massive...**
The Orange County Register - Nov 11, 2023
- News | Marine veterans find new mission as...**
The Orange County Register - Nov 11, 2023
- Crime and Public Safety | 3rd alarm fire at industrial strip center in...**
The Orange County Register - Nov 12, 2023
- 3-Alarm Fire Erupts In OC Industrial Strip - Firefighter Hospitalized**
Patch.com - Nov 13, 2023
- Toys Sought For OCFA Drive In Mission Viejo**
Patch.com - Nov 13, 2023
- Local News | Initial cleanup efforts underway in Tustin but...**
The Orange County Register - Nov 14, 2023
- Local News | Tustin hangar to be demolished in coming days**
The Orange County Register - Nov 14, 2023
- 2nd flame-up reignites at historic hangar in Orange County**
Yahoo! News - Nov 14, 2023
- Crews Remove Hazardous Materials After Tustin Blimp Hangar Fire**
The Epoch Times - Nov 16, 2023
- Local News | Tustin hangar fire nearing its end**
The Orange County Register - Nov 17, 2023
- Demolition of burned Tustin hangar underway; asbestos levels 'below any level of concern'**
Yahoo! News - Nov 19, 2023
- Crime and Public Safety | Winds create some havoc for OC, briefly closing...**
The Orange County Register - Nov 20, 2023
- Worker stabbed at Orange County Amazon distribution center**
Yahoo! News - Nov 21, 2023
- Fire Reported In South OC Amid Windy Weather**
Patch.com - Nov 21, 2023
- 1 killed, several injured when pursuit vehicle crashes, overturns in Buena Park**
Yahoo! News - Nov 21, 2023
- Crime and Public Safety | Barn beside Knott's Berry Farm catches fire...**
The Orange County Register - Nov 23, 2023
- Woman dead after vehicle crashes into lake in Orange County**
Yahoo! News - Nov 24, 2023
- Woman's body found in car submerged in Irvine lake**
Yahoo! News - Nov 24, 2023
- Crime and Public Safety | Woman dies in Irvine after car plunges into...**
The Orange County Register - Nov 24, 2023
- Vacant barn catches fire near Knott's Berry Farm**
Yahoo! News - Nov 24, 2023
- Charging lithium-ion battery sparks fire, explodes in family's garage**
Your Life A to Z (KTVC-TV) - Nov 27, 2023
- Crime and Public Safety | Firefighters see raw tragedy while helping us...**
The Orange County Register - Nov 28, 2023
- World's largest firefighting helicopters now available in 3 SoCal counties to battle fires all year**
MSN.com - Nov 28, 2023
- House Fire Breaks Out In Mission Viejo Wednesday Morning**
Patch.com - Nov 29, 2023
- Knott's Berry Farm | Knott's Berry Farm barn destroyed by fire was...**
The Orange County Register - Nov 29, 2023

Promotions

- Anthony Vasily, Fire Prevention Specialist



Retirements

- John Bryson, Firefighter
- John Chestner, Fire Captain
- Sean Colgan, Fire Apparatus Engineer
- Andrew Guzman, Fire Prevention Analyst

