



CEDAR RAPIDS FIRE DEPARTMENT

2011 Recognition Ceremony Recipients



Award for Distinguished Action

Captain Phillip J. Nejd, Firefighter Justin B. Jensen, and Firefighter Joshua L. Jensen



On June 19, 2011, the Fire Department was dispatched at 1:34 a.m. to 226 27th Street NW for a fire in an apartment bedroom. When firefighters arrived on scene at the two-story apartment complex, there were flames showing from a lower apartment bedroom window that faces 27th Street NW. The crew of Captain Phillip Nejd, Firefighter Justin Jensen, and Firefighter Joshua Jensen, operating on Truck 1, performed a rescue of three individuals from the fire. As crews were arriving, the occupants were getting ready to jump from a second story window. As the Engine crew made access to control the fire to apartment of origin, the Truck crew deployed a ground ladder to the window where the occupants were located. While rescuing them via ground ladder directly above the fire apartment, flames were coming out of the window and were lapping up at the firefighters as they performed the rescue. They were able to maintain their position and safely rescue all three occupants, as well as the family dog.

Award for Distinguished Action

Julie A. Kane of Cedar Rapids, IA

On the afternoon of August 2, 2011, Cedar Rapids firefighters were called to the swimming pool of the Red Roof Inn at 3243 South Ridge Drive SW for the report of a drowning. Upon arrival, firefighters found a four-year old boy that had been pulled from the pool and life-saving emergency care had been rendered by bystander, Julie Kane. Ms. Kane cleared the boy's airway, did chest compressions, and provided rescue breathing until the child was able to breathe on his own. Through her efforts, the boy regained pulses, breathing, and consciousness. The boy was then transported by Area Ambulance Service to a local hospital for continued care. The boy was released a few days later without any deficit following the incident. The actions of Ms. Kane were critical in saving the boy's life.

Award for Distinguished Service

Firefighter James E. Porter



On July 7, 2011, while returning home after a 24-hour work shift, Firefighter James Porter stopped to assist a stranded motorist. The following editorial published in the Cedar Rapids Gazette on July 10th, 2011 does a great job of illustrating the caring of Firefighter Porter:

I would like to extend a huge thank you to the man wearing a CRFD shirt driving a Saturn wagon who pulled over on July 7 to help me. My tire was completely flat and I was 40 miles from home, sitting along busy Highway 30.

I greatly appreciated the help but he refused to take any money for his hard work. I will definitely pay his kindness forward. Thank you!

Sarah Purk of Belle Plaine

Award for Distinguished Service

Firefighter Michael W. Poch



Some time ago the “Hose House No. 5” stone block that used to adorn retired Fire Station 5 was found in a pile of rubble by Firefighter Julie Popelka. She contacted her superiors and the block was relocated to Station 5 until a decision could be made about what to do with it permanently. Using his skill as a brick layer that he learned prior to being employed by the City of Cedar Rapids, Firefighter Poch created a brick wall in front of the current Station 5 that incorporates the recovered stone. This was done while on duty between responses and other daily duties. The resulting wall is a piece of art that displays the department’s rich history and also illustrates Firefighter Poch’s talent and dedication to the Cedar Rapids Fire Department.



Letter of Commendation



Fire Marshal James L. Thatcher, Assistant Fire Marshal Vance B. McKinnon III, and Robert R. Swain, Jr. of Cedar Rapids, IA

On or about mid-morning of March 1, 2011, a man entered the Police Substation at 1501 1st Avenue SE to receive information in regards to a program. He approached the front desk that was staffed by volunteer Robert “Russ” Swain. After finding out that there was an outstanding warrant for his arrest, the man became angry and aggressive towards staff members. The man then began assaulting Mr. Swain. Assistant Fire Marshal Vance McKinnon and Fire Marshal James Thatcher came to the aid of Mr. Swain and the three of them were able to stop the assault and calm the man until the arrival of the Police Department. Without the actions of Mr. Swain, Assistant Fire Marshal McKinnon, and Fire Marshal Thatcher, the situation would certainly have escalated to a greater level.

Letter of Commendation



Firefighter Amy S. Kunkle

Through the course of her day, Firefighter Amy Kunkle has proven to go above and beyond her normal duties quite frequently. On January 26, 2011, Firefighter Kunkle responded to a medical emergency on the City’s northwest side. Firefighter Kunkle made such an impact on that call that it prompted a telephone call from Colleen Tierney. She was quite impressed with Amy’s service. Mrs. Tierney stated, “Her caring nature and calming voice made a bad situation easier.” Amy is always smiling and positive. She sets a great example for fellow employees.

Letter of Commendation



Firefighter Marcus P. Burns

On May 16, 2011, the Recognition Committee received a nomination for Firefighter Marcus Burns from Captain Ron Luckerth. Captain Luckerth wanted to recognize Firefighter Burns for his work in creating new maps that are displayed on the wall of Station 9. On his own time without direction, Firefighter Burns used satellite photo technology to create maps of the apartment complexes that Engine 9 responds to. These maps are used daily and aid in the safe and efficient response of Engine 9 when called for service.

Letter of Commendation

Firefighter Randy R. Macku



On the morning of March 23, 2011, Firefighter Randy Macku reported to work early as usual. While preparing for the day before his shift started, there was an Emergency Medical Services call dispatched reporting a person down that was pulseless and breathless. Knowing that extra assistance would be needed, Firefighter Macku, of his own accord, responded to the call with the on-duty crew. His assistance was crucial during the call and was greatly appreciated by Acting Captain Brent Smith and the rest of the responding crew. Firefighter Macku frequently reports to work early and is no stranger to taking an early call.

Letter of Commendation



Captain Daniel C. Ripley, Firefighter Bryan L. Johnson, and Firefighter Rion C. Schulze

On November 7, 2010, Captain Daniel Ripley, Firefighter Bryan Johnson, and Firefighter Rion Schulze, while on Engine 5, were called to Soapy Waters Laundromat at 808 6th Street SW for a male patient down and it was unknown whether the patient was breathing. Upon arrival, they found a 53-year old male in cardiac arrest. In conjunction with Area Ambulance Service, the crew of Engine 5 performed resuscitation on the patient, including Advanced Life Support. Through their actions, the firefighters and ambulance crews were able to regain a pulse on the patient prior to the ambulance's arrival at the hospital. The man was treated further at the hospital and was released a few days later. The man was able to walk out of the hospital under his own power without any adverse effects of the cardiac arrest. Captain Wolfe stated it best in his nomination:

"The actions of these three individuals exemplifies what we at CRFD strive to attain. Their efforts on this day truly saved a man's life."