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SAN FRANCISCO FIRE DEPARTMENT

Public Information Office

Press Release

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SFFD's NERT RECEIVES 2016 California Governor's Volunteering & Service Award

On April 7, 2016, The State of California presented the 2016 Governor's Volunteering and Service Awards and the Hoffman Prize to honorees that have gone above and beyond in the world of service and volunteerism.

The San Francisco Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (SF NERT) Disaster Corps Unit received the California Disaster Volunteer Program of the Year award. This award honors an outstanding California disaster volunteer program that has demonstrated an unwavering service commitment to the local community.

"The men and women that we recognize today are California heroes," said California Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. "Their generosity and dedication are a real inspiration." Chief Service Officer Karen Baker presented the awards to the honorees in the Governor's Council Room in the State Capitol in Sacramento. "We have the pleasure to be able to recognize these amazing men and women, who are dedicated to volunteerism and service," said Karen Baker, California's Chief Service Officer. "Our communities are made better and more resilient thanks to these remarkable honorees that inspire us with their selfless acts of service, and we are excited to present them with these awards."

Volunteers from the San Francisco Neighborhood Emergency Response Team Disaster Corps Unit deployed to two areas of California during the most recent California Wildland Season – Lake County and Tulare County – that were experiencing a declared disaster and had an impact directly on residents. They also assisted County officials by becoming a force multiplier for their efforts when there were too few staff to meet the need.

"The NERT Disaster Corps, coordinated by San Francisco Fire Department Lieutenant Erica Arteseros, were prepared and well trained for their deployment", said Fire Chief Joanne Hayes-White. "Without professional volunteerism in times of disaster, recovery efforts can be extremely delayed. San Francisco is lucky to have them."

"It was an honor to be able to support the County, and the local residents returning to the area", said Lt. Erica Arteseros. "The story is best told by the volunteers who participated in this deployment:"

"I feel truly honored to have been able to help in regards to the Valley Fire in Lake County. My recent experiences over the past week have enabled me to utilize all my FEMA /NERT/Nursing

skills. The Valley Fire Disaster has redirected my life in a very meaningful way more than I can express in words. I will never take anything or anyone for granted ever again. Fire does not discriminate.”

- Sylvia Borgonovo, Marina Neighborhood

In addition to this award, the SFFD NERT’s recent activation drill was selected by FEMA to be a featured story in their CERT-in-action series. A film crew was on hand to capture the event.

The San Francisco Fire Commission will acknowledge the NERT Program and the receipt of the Award from the State of California at its regular meeting on Wednesday, June 8, 2016. The Meeting will be held at San Francisco City Hall, Room 416 at 9:00 a.m.

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