

California Surf Lifesaving Association

Southwest Region - United States Lifesaving Association



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Ocean Lifeguard and Non-Lifeguard Heroes To Be Honored by the California Surf Life Saving Association (CSLSA).

Heroic Act and Meritorious Act Awards will be presented during the CSLSA's Board of Directors meeting on November 7, 2019 at Harvey West Park Clubhouse in Santa Cruz, CA.

For Immediate Release...

(Santa Cruz, CA). The California Surf Life Saving Assn. will honor two Ocean Lifeguards, one Junior Lifeguard and three non-lifeguards for demonstrating exemplary and extraordinary courage in the aquatic environment. These acts of heroism will be recognized in a presentation during the CSLSA's Fall Board of Directors meeting on November 7, 2019, at Harvey West Park Clubhouse, 325 Evergreen Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

The event is hosted by the Santa Cruz Fire Dept., Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Dept., and Santa Cruz Surf Lifesaving Assn.

Heroic Acts and Meritorious Act Awards will be presented to California State Parks Peace Officer Lifeguard Andrew Helble, Huntington City Beach Marine Safety Officer Doug Leach, Oceanside Junior Lifeguard Mick Billings, CA State Parks Peace Officer Matthew Ephron, employee Chad Hammel and surfer Ethan Hurst.

"It is our honor to recognize these individuals who demonstrated quick-thinking, decisive action and bravery beyond the call of duty," said Bill Humphreys, president of the CSLSA who will present the awards. "Their heroism in one of the most unpredictable forces in nature – the ocean -- is both inspirational and worthy of recognition."

Helble, Ephron and Hammel will be recognized for their rescue of a 13 year-old Great White shark bite victim in the ocean off Leucadia State Beach in Encinitas; Leach for his jump from a helicopter to rescue the occupants of an overturned vessel six miles from shore; Billings for utilizing skills learned in the Junior Lifeguard program to rescue a drowning swimmer caught in a rip current; Hurst for rescuing a swimmer in distress in large surf and at night, using the sound of the victim's voice to locate her, and by using skills acquired during a S.A.L.T program (Surfer Awareness in Lifesaving Training).

(Full rescue narratives can be found on cslsa.org under "Special Awards" tab).

About the Awards:

Through the Medal of Valor, Heroic Act and Meritorious Act, the CSLSA salutes its recipients for their bravery, courage, and service to humanity. The Medal of Valor is the highest award given by the CSLSA to a lifeguard who voluntarily risked their life in an extraordinary effort to save a life.

Recipients of all awards are honored at CSLSA Board of Directors meetings. The recipients and their families are invited to the meeting to receive a collective thank you and a certificate of heroism.

About The CSLSA:

As open-water lifesavers, the mission of the CSLSA is to promote Beach Safety awareness (“Always Swim Near A Lifeguard”) and Professional Lifeguard standards through public education, training programs, exchange programs, junior lifeguard programs, competition and other means. The ultimate goal is to prevent and reduce aquatic injuries, accidents and death at open-water beaches in the United States and throughout the world.

The CSLSA is a non-profit (501-C3 tax exempt) organization chartered to promote beach safety awareness and professional open-water lifesaving standards. The 30 CSLSA Chapters/Agencies share the mission, goals and objectives of the CSLSA. The CSLSA is the West Coast Region of seven regions of the United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) which in turn is affiliated with the International Lifesaving Association (ILS).

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