

Local heroes include life-saving firefighters, police officers, a 12 year old girl, and an Olympian

Hauppauge, NY— Thursday, Rep. Steve Israel (D–Long Island) honored Long Island’s “Hometown Heroes” for their contributions to the community and extraordinary demonstrations of courage. Honorees include a 12 year old girl who helped save two lives in one week, two firemen who broke through a wall to save a man, a volunteer fire captain who spent 60 years in the fire department and lost his life in the line of duty, two police officers who revived a man with CPR, three firemen who saved a woman and her dog from a burning home, and an Olympic sailor from Bayport.

“The men and women being honored today are proven leaders in their communities. Their acts of bravery and heroism are an example to us all. I’m proud to have them as my neighbors here on Long Island and I’m grateful for their contributions,” said Rep. Israel.

The following “Hometown Heroes” were honored with a proclamation from Rep. Israel:

Fire Captain John Ippolito and 2nd Lt. Edward Kunz - Bayshore Fire Department

Firefighters John Ippolito (Captain) and Edward Kunz (2nd Lt.) entered a burning building in Bay Shore to rescue a trapped man. As other firefighters worked to stretch a hose to the fire, the two realized the trapped man wouldn’t have long. The entrance to the victim’s bedroom was blocked by flames and smoke, so Ippolito and Kunz decided to make a new entrance by breaking down a wall with their hands. Their effort succeeded and they were able to get the victim outside where they then performed CPR until he had a pulse and medics arrived. The victim survived the ordeal because of their efforts. He has since passed away from an unrelated illness.

Officers Christopher Grimm and Karl Keininger - Lloyd Harbor Police Department

This March, Chris Grimm and Karl Keininger of the Lloyd Harbor PD responded to a radio call about an unconscious Lloyd Harbor resident. The officers arrived and found that the man wasn’t breathing and had no pulse. They administered CPR and shocked the man with a defibrillator several times. Finally, his vital signs returned and he was transported to Huntington Hospital where he made a full recovery. They two officers the Suffolk County Top Cop award for an outstanding job.

Chief Salvatore Formica; Ex-Chief Tony Napoli; Assistant Chief Peter Paccione – Commack Fire Department

Firemen Salvatore Formica (Chief), Tony Napoli (Ex-Chief) and Peter Paccione (Asst. Chief) responded to residents calling about smoke billowing out of a house. Neighbors told them that no one was home, but the officers used their instincts and entered the house to look for a victim. They had noticed smoke coming out of the bedroom and a car parked in the driveway. Their instincts were right, and they were able to save both a woman who was woozy from the smoke and her German Shepherd who was trapped in a doggie pen. If the officers did not react to the situation immediately the women may have suffered greater injuries or even lost her life.

Katie Petrozzo, Huntington Student

In one week, Petrozzo saved three lives. On May 12th, she was with her mother outside of a bank in Huntington when her mother suffered an apparent stroke. Petrozzo rushed inside and grabbed bank employees for help. She also was able identify and report to EMT's that her mother had a stroke and not a seizure because of what she learned in her health class. If Petrozzo hadn't been there, her mom may have died. Five days later Petrozzo was babysitting for neighbors on her block when the carbon monoxide detector went off. She took the two children outside, along with a phone, and called for help. She had also learned about the dangers of carbon monoxide from her health class. Petrozzo received a proclamation from the Town of Huntington for her bravery.

Wilbur Ritter (being accepted by his sons Michael and Peter Ritter), Sayville Fire Department

Wilbur dedicated 60 years of his life to the Sayville Fire Department. He passed away from a heart attack while responding an emergency call in August 2006. He was well respected within the fire department and held many positions, including President and Captain. He spent his life dedicating himself to the community and was revered by fire departments throughout Long Island.

Olympian Debbie Capozzi, Bayport

Debbie is 27 years old, was born in Smithtown and currently resides in Bayport when she is on land. She has been sailing since she was 8 years old when she lived within walking distance to the local yacht club. She is currently regarded as one of the worlds elite Yngling sailors. After placing third in the Olympic trials in 2004, Capozzi knew she wanted to make the 2008 Olympic team. She spent the next four years competing in various regattas, making a name for herself and her team as one of the top Yngling sailors. In the 2008 Beijing Olympics her team competed down to the medal race, but unfortunately they did not win. This only motivates her to train harder for the 2012 Olympics in London.