

Good For You | by Nova Beall

Association honors two Sunstar paramedics

It's reassuring to know that two of the nation's best emergency medical service workers live and work here in Pinellas County.

The American Ambulance Association recently presented Sunstar paramedics **Megan Hollern** and **Larry Marshall**, both of Largo, with the Star of Life award during three days of education and recognition in Washington, D.C.

As part of the visit, Hollern and Marshall, along with 78 other Star of Life winners from around the country, got to meet with members of Florida's congressional delegation and discuss legislative issues important to all EMS professionals.

"We are extremely proud that Megan and Larry have been named for this award," said **Mark Postma**, chief operating officer of Sunstar Paramedics. "Their dedication and skill exemplify what we strive for in serving the Pinellas County community, and it's an honor for them to be included among the nation's best emergency medical service professionals."

Hollern, a field operations supervisor, has worked with Sunstar since 2009. She was recognized for a call last summer when she came to the aid of a woman with no palpable blood pressure who was lying on the beach after a triathlon. Hollern quickly premedicated the patient and took steps to return her to a normal heartbeat.

Marshall is training officer for Sunstar's Critical Care Transport Program. He began his EMS career in 1979 and joined Sunstar in 1988. He helped lead the Critical Care Program through three Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems accreditations and was instrumental in the program, receiving the Association of Air Medical Services Ground Transportation Provider of the Year Award in 2011.

Sunstar is a 911 ambulance transport service for all Pinellas County residents that employs 500-plus local residents and responds to about 500 calls per day. Sunstar's people are heavily involved in Pinellas communities, focusing largely on public safety programs for the public and for schools.

Sunstar is also a recipient of the Florida Governor's Sterling Award, the state's most prestigious award recognizing "role



Sunstar staff at the Stars of Life banquet are, from left, operations manager **Leslie McAllister**, Critical Care Transport Program training officer **Larry Marshall**, field operations supervisor **Megan Hollern** and chief operating officer **Mark Postma**.

models for organizational performance excellence."

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No one can seem to agree on who popularized the proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child," but that doesn't make the saying any less meaningful.

This is especially true for the Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County, whose mission is to support the healthy development of all children and their families in Pinellas County through advocacy, research, planning, training, communications, coordination of resources and funding.

To that end, JWB recently named **Michelle Dublin** of Clearwater winner of the 19th annual Cooperman-Bogue Kids-First Award, honoring those who go above and beyond the call of their human services job duties to improve the lives of Pinellas County's children.

Dublin, a family support worker for the Pinellas County

Health Department's Healthy Families program since 2000, received the award and a check for \$2,000 during a luncheon March 21 at the Hilton St. Petersburg Carillon Park.

As a family support worker in the Healthy Families program, Dublin visits expectant mothers or families with kids up to age 5 in their homes to educate parents on child development, offer parenting support and provide the tools to help children grow up healthy and successful.

"It's basically their goals — it's not what I want for them," Dublin said in a JWB video posted to YouTube.

She works with 25 to 30 families at a time and meets with them as often as once a week. "So, I don't come in and say, 'This is your goal, this is what you're going to do.' No. It's what you want to do. I'm just going to write down what you tell me."

Dublin knocks on doors until her families get what they need, then teaches them how to use that ability for themselves.

"She's a little bit like a case manager, she's a little bit like a parent educator and she's a little bit like a life coach all rolled into one," said Dublin's supervisor, **Christy Robinson**, who nominated Dublin for the award.



Michelle Dublin was given a Kids-First Award.



Dunedin Fire Department **Michael Davis**, second from right, of Dunedin presented a photo and patch to Dunedin Fire Station No. 60 firefighters, from left, **Lou Staggs**, **Jason Griggs**, Lt. **George Treubig**, **Greg Smart**, division Chief **Erich Thiemann** and fire Chief **Jeff Parks**. Their photo will be presented to Highlands Fire and Rescue.



Dunedin Fire Department A photo and patch from Scotland's Highlands Fire and Rescue Service was given to the firefighters of Fire Station No. 60.

"People enjoy being around her and they get something out of their time with her."

Dublin was one of four quarterly winners chosen in 2012. Each was rewarded with a check for \$500 and other prizes courtesy of JWB and sponsors Transamerica, Alltrust Insurance, BB&T Bank, WUSF, Radio Disney and Bright House Networks.

The Cooperman-Bogue Kids-First Awards are named in honor of **Leonard Cooperman** and **Judge Lincoln C. Bogue**, two men whose concern and dedication for at-risk children was instrumental in the creation of the JWB Children's Services Council.

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Firefighters and paramedics are a tight-knit bunch. Even an ocean can't put a damper on international friendships. Now add to that the kinship between Dunedin and its Scottish heritage, and here comes **Michael Davis** of Dunedin.

Davis, who spends his summers in Scotland, strolled into Dunedin Fire Station No. 60 on March 14 with a framed photograph of a Scottish firefighting crew under his arm and one of their patches in hand. His goal: deliver both to the Amer-

ican firefighters on behalf of his friend and fellow Scotsman **Gary Laud**.

Laud, who vacations in the area but lives in Grantown on Spey, a town in the Highland Council Area in Scotland where he works for the Highlands Fire and Rescue Service, conceived the neighborly networking event. He had intended to make the presentation himself but developed a medical condition which required him to return home sooner than expected.

The Dunedin crew was delighted with the unexpected gift and plans to display the photograph in the fire station at 1042 Virginia St.

Davis didn't leave empty-handed. A photograph of the Dunedin Fire crew and officials will accompany him back to Scotland, where he will share it with Laud in April.

Mail Good For You items to Nova Beall at 710 Court St., Clearwater, FL 33756; fax to (727) 445-4119; or email nbeall@tampabay.com.

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