



Banquet Spotlights Emergency Lifesaving

Highland Emergency Teams Receive 2 Siren Awards from EMS Agency

The Alameda County Emergency Medical Services Agency brought rescuers together with survivors at a recent banquet, and Highland Hospital's Emergency teams were among the heroes.

In recognition of National Emergency Medical Services Week (May 18-24), the EMS luncheon hosted over 100 guests including civic and political leaders, health care professionals, firefighters, law enforcement, EMTs, paramedics and other EMS community partners.

In celebrating this year's theme, "EMS – Dedicated...For Life," the May 21 event at Sunol Valley Golf Club focused on how the prompt efforts of emergency personnel, physicians and other health care professionals, and ordinary citizens alike can unite to save a life when time is measured in split seconds.

Keynote speaker Alex Briscoe, director of the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency and a widely recognized innovator in public health issues, said Alameda County's EMS Agency is in the top tier- one of the nation's best in response times and cost effectiveness.

Michael Jacobs, Cardiovascular Program Manager at Alameda County EMS, presented Siren Awards, and Highland Hospital claimed two, in extraordinary events that all too likely could have proven fatal without decisive and immediate action sustained by commitment, knowledge and skill.

Jacobs praised Highland as a "center of excellence."

"I always tell people if I was ever really sick or really injured – take me to Highland," he said.

Dr. Gregory Victorino, head of Highland's Surgical Trauma Center, accepted a Siren Award that recognized action, expertise and care that not only saved a young father's life but restored him to a promising recovery from severe head and chest trauma.

The 41-year-old father of three, who was struck and run over by a massive water truck, is driving again now and is fully mobile. In a striking moment in a day full of emotion, he thanked the Highland Trauma Team and the EMS personnel who got him safely to the hospital.

"Thank you," he said, "for making me able to hold my baby."

Dr. Victorino also expressed gratitude to EMS:

"We couldn't do what we do," he said, "if you didn't do what you do so well."

The second Highland award recognized individual heroism, astute medical insight, and fast action. Jose Tamayo, out with his family on Easter Sunday at San Leandro's Marina Park waterfront, first noticed the cries of a young girl who was struggling in the bay. He pulled her to safety, then saw a small arm farther out. Tamayo rushed to the boy and found him floating face down and unresponsive. He brought him ashore and used CPR training he had learned at work – the boy weakly started breathing again.

In the meantime, Emergency responders rushed to the scene and called the crisis in to dispatchers, who alerted the doctor on call, Highland's director of Emergency Medicine, Dr. Harrison Alter.



Quickly sizing things up, Dr. Alter advised EMS to take the boy to UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland. Although farther away, he determined it was better equipped to save the child's life. He arrived in critical condition, but a drowning had been averted.

Tamayo's modestly recounted the events to news media, and a video clip was shown at the banquet. Throughout the gathering, the chance to recall those desperate moments was a moving experience for survivors and rescuers alike. At AHS, we all can be proud of the lifesaving efforts that happen all across our health care landscape the year round.