The Michael O. McNamee Award of Valor reflects a larger mission about what it means to be brave in the face of danger, as the award is named after Worcester, MA, Fire Department District Chief (ret.) Mike McNamee, who displayed great courage at the Worcester Cold Storage Warehouse Fire in December 1999, when he made the bold decision to stop additional Worcester firefighters from entering the building when there were already six lost inside.

Firehouse is pleased to announce the honorees in the 2019 Firehouse Magazine Valor Awards.

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1. Jonathan Baxter, San Francisco Fire Department

Lt. Jonathan Baxter has served as the community affairs and media relations officer since 2016 and grew his position into a renowned community engagement and fire prevention success. Baxter introduced EMS and fire science curriculum into high schools to develop a path for youth into the fire service. He created surf and tsunami education warning programs for the city’s popular beaches. In response to an increase in police officer injuries at fire scenes, Baxter developed a Law Enforcement Response to Fires Program. When he started, the department reached about 2,000 people annually, and in 2019, outreach efforts touched more than 150,000 people.

2. Randal Crider, Cobb County, GA, Fire and Emergency Services

Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services always is looking for innovative ways to interact with the community under Chief Randal Crider’s leadership. The department started providing mentors to middle school students through a partnership with the Cobb County School District and Underwriters Laboratories. The Cobb Xplorlabs program puts firefighters and arson investigators in the classroom with science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) teachers to conduct fire forensics lab experiments. Firefighters not only interact with the students but use the interaction to recruit future firefighters by introducing them to all of the career opportunities, including firefighter, fire marshal, data division and fire protection engineer.

3. Evan T. Sanna, Regan M. Marshall, Robert M. Herbert and Michael A. Dolby, Jr., Prince George’s County, MD, Fire/EMS Department

The Prince George’s County Fire/EMS Department’s Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) program was established to identify frequent users of the 9-1-1 system to connect them with the appropriate community resources. The team works with other healthcare agencies to ensure that citizens are being treated at the right facility for the proper assistance by using unexplored medical and social programs to improve the quality of healthcare to county residences.

4. Shaun Pryor, Langston City, OK, Fire Department

Shaun Pryor is committed to helping those who are inside and outside of the fire service. He has been developing a mental health program for firefighters in rural areas of Oklahoma. Along with fellow firefighters, Pryor accompanies children whose father passed away to daddy-daughter dances. He has organized clothing drives to help those who have overcome homelessness and drug use, so they have clothing to go on job interviews. Pryor cooks for families at the Ronald McDonald House.