

# MENDING EVERYDAY HEROES

Honoring heroes from the Los Angeles School Police Department (LASPD), Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) and the California Highway Patrol (CHP)

## *Injured in the Line of Duty*

This past March, LASPD Officer **Crawford Thompson** was helping to clear the wreckage of an auto accident in Northridge when tragedy struck. A drunk driver in an oncoming pickup truck collided with his patrol car, crushed his body between it and another vehicle, and snapped his right femoral bone. He was rushed to Northridge Hospital's **Trauma Center** where he was stabilized as medical staff worked diligently to save his leg.

Months later, Officer Thompson was the guest of honor at a LASPD press conference held at the hospital, where medical staff was pleased to see him walk with only the assistance of a cane. "During my hospital stay, I was put at ease because of the constant reassurance. I was confident that the staff knew what they were doing," he said. "I never had to worry."

During the conference, LASPD publicly thanked Northridge Hospital for providing immediate and effective care to one of their own. **Lawrence Manion**, Chief of Police, LASPD, and LAUSD Board Member **Jon Lauritzen** publicly acknowledged Northridge Hospital with plaques. Those involved in Officer Thompson's immediate care were also recognized and given the opportunity to speak with Officer Thompson about his recovery, including Emergency Department Physician **Steven Cole, MD**, Trauma Center Medical Director **Shawki Saad, MD**, and **Dantia Benson, RN**.



**Officer Thompson** says he was constantly reassured by the staff who acted quickly to save his life. ED Director **Barbara Payne, RN, MHA**; **Dantia Benson, RN**; Officer **Crawford Thompson**; Northridge Hospital President **Mike Wall**; and ED Medical Director **Stephen Jones, MD** (l-r).

## *Firefighter's Flame Still Shines Bright*

When an SUV careened into his pickup truck this past Memorial Day weekend, Los Angeles Fire Department Firefighter and Engineer **Henry Gassbari** had a 10-percent chance of survival. The SUV was traveling more than 100 mph and sped through a red light at the intersection at Roscoe and Reseda Boulevards. It crashed into another vehicle, a Metro bus and Gassbari's pickup, which rolled three times tossing his big-block engine 30 feet and the truck's battery an additional 400 feet.



LAFD Firefighter and Engineer **Henry Gassbari** appreciated the hospital staff's passion to make a difference after his near-fatal accident. Henry Gassbari with wife **Carrie**, son **Gino**, and former LAFD Chief **William Bamattre** (l-r).

"Gassbari suffered a conglomeration of injuries—including a cerebral concussion and ruptured spleen and diaphragm—alone, any of these could have been lethal. He also had multiple fractures that put him at risk for losing his left arm and leg," remembers **Laurence Weekes, MD**, who treated Gassbari with help from **MaryAnn Trephan, MD**, in the **Emergency Department**. "He was in respiratory distress when he arrived, so we did a quick assessment and immediately secured the airway," adds Trephan. "That was critical before he went into surgery." Gassbari spent one month in ICU—where he was in a coma for several weeks—before being transferred to our inpatient **Rehabilitation Center**.

Nearly four months after the accident, Gassbari was back on his feet standing humbly with his then 9-month-old son Gino, wife Carrie, fellow firefighters, city officials, and the Northridge Hospital medical staff who helped save his life. "I'm so grateful for everything the staff did for me and my family," says Gassbari. "Their passion to make a difference was apparent."

During the ceremony, City Council member **Dennis Zine** presented awards to the **Trauma team, Emergency Department, ICU, and Center for Rehabilitation** for their heroic efforts. "Seeing this beautiful (Gassbari) family reunited brings tears to my eyes," Zine said. "This would not have been possible without the people at Northridge Hospital."

*(Continued on back cover)*

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## *Flying Again, Despite Broken Wing*

(Continued from page 5)

As a California Highway Patrol (CHP) airplane pilot, **Andres Frentzel** always maintained control of the Cessna T206. But on a fateful day in April, he took the back seat as a passenger when he was airlifted from Rosamond, California, to Northridge Hospital's Trauma Center after suffering critical injuries in a high-speed motorcycle racing accident at Willow Springs International Raceway.

After the 70-mile trip west, Northridge Hospital medical staff promptly performed surgery to treat Frentzel's injuries, which included bilateral collapsed lungs; a compound fracture to his left arm; a severe head injury; three fractured vertebrae; and broken ribs, sternum and clavicle. He then entered a three-week induced coma where he was closely monitored by our staff and visited by family, friends, and even CHP coworkers who arrived by helicopter on Northridge Hospital's helipad.

Nearly two years have passed, but Frentzel remembers the accident like it was yesterday. "It's a miracle to be able to walk, work and breathe," he says. "I can't even begin to express the gratitude for the professionalism the staff maintains, and the unbelievable tasks they face when someone as broken as I was is delivered into their hands."

Today, Frentzel is back at work and enjoying the adrenaline rush that his job provides. And while he still has a passion for motorcycles, he's opted to stay off the racetrack and instead takes leisurely rides to celebrate his renewed lease on life.

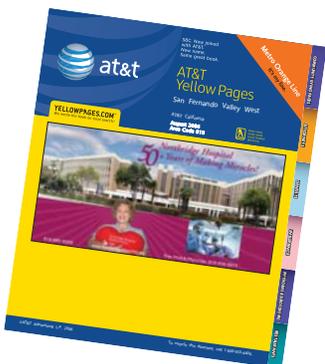


CHP Airplane Pilot **Andres Frentzel** was airlifted to Northridge Hospital's **Trauma Center** after suffering critical injuries in a high-speed motorcycle accident. He says it's difficult to express the sincere gratitude he has for the medical professionals who treated him.

*Northridge Hospital is proud to be designated as one of only two Level II Trauma Centers in the San Fernando Valley equipped to treat life-threatening injuries with successful outcomes such as these.*

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