A Message From the Deputy Chief
By Deputy Chief Ronnie Villanueva

In our first newsletter of 2020, I want to thank you all for allowing Operations South Bureau to serve you with courage, integrity and pride throughout the past decade. As we move into the twenty-twenties, I am excited about the challenges, which lay before us as we strive to meet the needs of our growing and diverse community.

This issue of SouthPoint highlights an essential component of our past and future success, you, the community. The safe and efficient management of day-to-day emergencies to large-scale, complex events relies on collaborative partnerships with community organizations, which enhance the resilience of our neighborhoods and our city as a whole. I hope this winter edition provides you with a snapshot of both individuals and community-based organizations, which have been integral to our proactive management approach as an emergency service provider and community partner. In addition to praising our community for your contributions, we would like to remind you all of the importance of taking care of yourselves, so we can all take better care of each other.

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Census 2020: Are you ready to be counted?

Census 2020 is around the corner. The results will determine not only our representation in Congress, but how over $115 billion is spent every year on California schools, healthcare, housing, transportation, and other vital programs in our neighborhoods. But we won’t get an accurate count in 2020 unless everyone participates. Together, we can ensure a complete, fair, and accurate count in 2020. Ensure to participate! For more information go to: https://census.lacity.org/
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is closely monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) coronavirus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. Both the CDC and the World Health Organization (WHO) are monitoring the situation closely. The CDC has determined the level of risk is low to the general American public at this time. While the numbers of those impacted are high in China, please remember this is still considered to be a relatively isolated illness. There is an ongoing investigation to determine more about this outbreak. Additionally, OSB is in constant contact with our allied public safety agencies at all levels to ensure the highest level of safety in Los Angeles.

As a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to minimize the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Frequently clean hands by using soap and water (for at least 20 seconds) or alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands; and
- Avoid close contact with anyone who is sick.

If you develop cold-like symptoms:
- Stay home from school or work;
- When coughing and sneezing, cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – throw tissue away immediately and wash hands;
- Avoid close contact with others;
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces, and
- If you have a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, seek medical care and share recent travel history with your healthcare provider.

Here are a few resources about the novel coronavirus that will help you continue to stay informed about the latest updates:

CDC: Risk Assessment
CDC: Situation Summary
WHO: Statement regarding the outbreak of novel coronavirus

MySafe:LA Celebrates 11 Years in Los Angeles

MySafe:LA is celebrating its 11th year delivering fire and life safety education and training in Los Angeles. The California non-profit organization has been an education and training partner of the LAFD since 2009, and each new year sees advances in programs and results. In just the past four years, MySafe:LA has provided more than 41,000 smoke alarms to LA area residents, has taught more than 37,000 students in LA high schools hands-only CPR, and has graduated more than 11,300 junior fire inspectors from LAUSD elementary schools.

MySafe:LA’s working relationship with the LAFD covers a wide array of initiatives. Working closely with Operations South Bureau, whenever a fatality fire occurs, should the Incident Commander determine value in reaching area residents, a MySafe:LA education team will canvass the adjoining homes and streets, providing and installing free 10-year sealed smoke alarms and CO detectors. OSB and MySafe:LA coordinate planned smoke alarm canvassing, MySafe:LA coordinate planned smoke alarm canvassing, participation in community events, such as the annual Fleet Week, and other fire and life safety activities, all designed to create a more resilient community.

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Be a Part of the CERT Team

Over the last couple of years, we’ve told you what the **LAFD’s Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** has been up to around the city. Tasks range from neighborhood based emergency drills to working support operations for the department. It occurred to us that we never mentioned, at length, how **YOU** can become part of this effort. The process is actually simple. First, go to [https://www.eventbrite.com/o/lafd-cert-program-7803155391](https://www.eventbrite.com/o/lafd-cert-program-7803155391) and find a class. CERT classes take place continuously all over the city, so find one that works best for you and get prepared to spend seven weeks (one day or night for three hours) learning the CERT process. **Keep this link because classes are updated all of the time.** The classes are taught by experienced LAFD Firefighter instructors. At the end of the seven-week period, you will receive a certificate as proof of completion. A Volunteer Battalion Coordinator will attend the final session and talk about "life after the class."

Life after the class includes available quarterly refreshers designed to keep the skills you learned sharp while adding new ones. Additionally, you will find out about community based activities your CERT team is up to and how to connect with those members...**your neighbors.** As you’ve seen in past articles, we are ALWAYS BUSY in our neighborhoods or on-scene when needed. Just by taking the class, **you will be opening up an amazing world of possibilities which will benefit you, your family, and your Los Angeles Community.** Everything CERT does is part of an overall volunteer effort. If you are a current CERT member living in South Bureau and you want to connect with your area team, reach out to us at [lafdcertsouth@gmail.com](mailto:lafdcertsouth@gmail.com) or by calling 213-595-1146. We will get you on the bureau e-mail list and you will never be out of the loop when it comes to the latest training and activities. Wear the green uniform of CERT and be a local hero to your community!

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

As technology continues to improve, so does the ability to use this technology in performing realistic training scenarios for our members. To achieve this, the LAFD recently acquired three infant simulation manikins, as well as four adult simulation manikins.

Manikins, full-body patient simulators, safely allow for the training of clinical skills, cognitive thinking and behavioral communication and have been used in the professional healthcare setting to train for medical, surgical, or clinical scenarios.

Last year we began training with our new “high fidelity” infant manikins to focus on the care and treatment of critically ill infants. These “high fidelity” manikins can simulate breathing, crying, talking, moving as well as mimic the sound of a heartbeat and respiratory sounds. Paramedics can perform ECG’s and practice ventilating with a mask, IV insertion, and even give vital medication through the veins. These manikins are wireless, so they can be taken anywhere to simulate different environments including bedrooms, cars, the sidewalk, or clinical settings.

This invaluable training in a controlled environment prepares our members for some of the worst case scenarios, as well as some of the common complaints we see daily in the field.
Meet Chin Thammasaengsri

Chin Thammasaengsri is a Los Angeles native who was born in the Mid-City section of South Bureau where he continues to reside. Educated in Los Angeles’s Catholic school system, he decided to take a different direction and attend California State University, Los Angeles to study Radio, Television, & Film. This area of study brought him to the CBS Television Network where he recently celebrated 29 years with the company. Outside of CBS, Chin has been a creator of numerous documentary films, news productions, and written work. It was during one of those film shoots that he discovered the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). He took the seven-week basic training program and joined his neighborhood team after completing the course as an active volunteer. Chin started out as a “neighborhood team member” working to strengthen the program in South Los Angeles when he was appointed as a coordinator over all of Battalion 18. After a year in that position, he was appointed to his current position, Bureau Coordinator, which gives him an area that runs from West Los Angeles to San Pedro. He has worked with our numerous volunteers as a support mechanism and booster to get more people aware of CERT & encourage involvement. Chin is also a member of CERT’s “Call Out Team,” which brings him “on scene” as a support member to the LAFD at varied incidents. When not “CERTing,” Chin “plays the role” of president in his neighborhood association and “Public Safety Liaison” to the Mid-City Neighborhood Council. Operations South Bureau greatly appreciates the effort of Chin and the entire CERT team. It is a pleasure working with a dedicated and hard-working group of volunteers.

MySafe:LA (continued from page 2)

All uniformed MySafe:LA members are qualified first responders, typically holding EMT NREMT certification. Several are paramedics and a few have the recently approved EMR (emergency medical responder) certification. MySafe:LA offers a paramedic scholarship to its best performing EMTs every other year, and the payoff is not only solid performance in community resilience, but preparation for a career in the fire service. In fact, the last three LAFD drill towers have had at least one MySafe:LA member graduate - and at least one of them is currently working in OSB.

MySafe:LA is a fully self-contained organization, with an internal marketing team, film team, web team, and education team. They are funded through grants and gifts, and the organization will not accept any funds from a fire department’s general fund. “Our job is to act as a force multiplier for the LAFD,” the XO, David Barrett noted recently. “We need to support LAFD members in their complex roles related to medical and fire suppression. That means fully supporting the Department’s mission, the union, and each member as they perform their jobs on a daily basis.” It should be noted that the award-winning film team has produced a number of training and PSA videos for the Department, including Post-Fire Decontamination, RT-130 (multiple years), and a number of recruitment promotions.

For 2020, MySafe:LA’s efforts in supporting OSB will continue to evolve. In addition to the ongoing Junior Fire Inspector, CPR, and community canvassing, a series of high profile “Disaster Decathlon” events will take place. These events will include a wide array of partners, will be produced for both schools and the general public, and are all part of the community resilience efforts underway across Los Angeles. MySafe:LA also has a unit dedicated to “repopulation” in the event of wildfire and other incidents wherein people may be forced to evacuate from their homes. They’ll also be spending more time in OSB fire stations, sharing their experiences and building on the already proud and collaborative relationship with the Department, and especially with Operations South Bureau.

You can learn more about MySafe:LA by visiting their website or following them on social media: www.mysafela.org.
Meet a South Bureau Firefighter

We would like to introduce to you Apparatus Operator (A/O) David Gastelum who works at Fire Station 92, serving the communities of Cheviot Hills and Century City. You may be wondering, “What is an Apparatus Operator (A/O)?” A/O’s drive specialized heavy fire apparatus such as aerial ladder trucks, aircraft crash rapid intervention vehicles, hazardous materials squad vehicles, and heavy utility rescue vehicles. A/O’s are one of the LAFD’s frontline leadership positions. They often work under conditions involving serious risk to personal safety, where situational awareness, job knowledge, technical skills, and physical fitness are essential to safe and effective operations.

Dave is a 20-year veteran of the LAFD and has been an A/O for almost 15 years. Dave joined the LAFD in 1999, after spending a few years with the Ontario Fire Department. He has worked throughout the City in Westwood, Highland Park, the Crenshaw District, MacArthur Park, and El Sereno.

Growing up in La Puente, California, Dave is a Southern California native who now resides in Redondo Beach with his two daughters. When not at work at Fire Station 92, Dave prioritizes spending time with his daughters, loves hanging out at the beach and snowboarding.

Giving back to the fire service family is a passion of Dave’s. Beyond his normal duties, he serves the LAFD as a member of our Peer Support Team and as a bagpiper for the newly formed LAFD Pipes and Drums group. Dave has also been involved in organizing several fundraising events for fellow firefighters dealing with life challenges.

One of Dave’s responsibilities as an Apparatus Operator is to operate the 100’ aerial ladder, which is attached to the fire truck. This is a skill A/O’s take pride in and requires hundreds of hours of training to master. At a recent high-rise fire in Brentwood, a man crawled out on 7th floor window ledge to escape the smoke and fire in his apartment. A/O Gastelum meticulously placed the aerial ladder at its maximum reach to allow his fellow firefighters to successfully rescue the person. This rescue was broadcast on news outlets and social media posts across the country and throughout the world!

Partnering to Provide Quality Public Safety

The working relationship between the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) is the gold standard for public safety agencies throughout the country and has never been better.

In continuing to solidify this partnership, the LAFD South Bureau Command staff hosted a lunch meeting with the LAPD South Bureau Command staff. This meeting brought together the LAPD Captains from the neighborhood divisions within South Bureau and the LAFD Battalion Chiefs from Battalions 6, 13 and 18. This meeting allowed for the commanders to meet, talk and plan, which ultimately results in the agencies providing the highest quality public safety to the City of Los Angeles.
Honoring a City Hero

The LAFD Command Staff, the South Bureau Commanders, and members from Battalion 18 were honored to take part in the recent memorial service for retired LAPD Assistant Chief Earl Paysinger. Chief Paysinger retired after 41 years with the LAPD, rising from the rank of patrol officer to first assistant chief, the second-highest ranking position in the LAPD. Paysinger was a leader in South L.A. and became a catalyst for community policing within the LAPD, focusing on community partnerships to reduce crime. He ultimately became the Deputy Chief of the South Bureau.

Assistant Chief Paysinger transformed the LAPD’s youth cadet program to become the successful group, which has a 91% high school graduation rate, and provides thousands of L.A.’s children with life lessons in academic excellence, character and judgment.

Upon retirement from the LAPD, Assistant Chief Paysinger was selected by the University of Southern California to be the Executive Vice President of Civic Engagement, due in part to his many contributions to the community. Chief Paysinger was ahead of his time, and provided direction for the future of LAPD and the law enforcement community. Chief Paysinger will be missed but his lasting impression in law enforcement will be forever felt in Los Angeles.

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Throughout my time in Operations South Bureau, we have made it a priority to also develop strong working relationships with the allied agencies tasked with public safety in Los Angeles. The public safety here is bar none but I am constantly reminded, no matter how rich the resources of one agency, alone we can do so little but together we can do so much. The winter edition details some of the efforts we have made to continually foster our working relationship with the Los Angeles Police Department, while also recognizing a pioneer within their organization, who set the standard for our community-centric service model.

The cornerstone of the LAFD’s mission is emergency service and therefore, we also wanted to recognize a firefighter within OSB who has made significant contributions throughout his career to the Department, while also affecting one of the most dramatic rescues within the LAFD to date.

In closing, I want you to know we are here for you and will continue to work tirelessly to provide exceptional public safety and community service.