



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on April 4, 2011

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The Goodness of America

Forging Forward Through Fire

When an unidentified 59-year-old woman crashed her car into a tree on the shoulder of a major highway in California, four strangers immediately sprang into action.

At approximately 12:30 in the afternoon on February 23, the female driver suddenly swerved to the right and hit a tree at freeway speed in her silver station wagon. With the driver still trapped inside of the car, the crushed vehicle immediately burst into flames.

Having witnessed the accident, drivers Tab Aryan Pure III, Maria Connolly, and Alvin Rovira stopped their cars and came to the aid of the woman.

Pure III used a small fire extinguisher to put out the flames, and teamed up with Connolly to pry open the driver's side door. As Pure III held open the bottom part of the door, the others threw wet dirt on the remaining flames.

Pure III describes what made the heroics possible. "Pure adrenaline. I think that went through my body. When I saw that woman, I was like, 'What would I do if that were my mother in there, or what would I want someone else to do.'"

Unfortunately, the vehicle reignited, prompting the help of another passerby, Brad Smith, who took a 20-pound extinguisher from his service truck and extinguished the remaining flames.

Though Smith ran 100 yards with the heavy extinguisher, he denies being a hero. "I just did what I was supposed to do. I had a big fire extinguisher, and I know what to do with car fires. I never really even thought about it."

He adds, however, that he does not believe it was an accident that he happened to stumble upon the scene. "I actually believe that. I really do, and I'm honestly not saying that in any way egotistically. But I believe I was supposed to be there, and I believe it was supposed to happen the way it did. I'm relishing the moment."

Meanwhile, Connolly, who had been taking her 12-year-old son home from school, explained that she worked to calm the frightened driver. "I just tried to reassure her that help was coming. I stroked her hair, tried to reassure her as much as I could. But it wasn't just me. A lot of people were doing whatever was needed to help."

According to police division Chief Darrell Lee, all four citizens are heroes. "We want to thank them, because they basically saved her life. Without the actions they took, this would probably have had a terrible ending."

Lee concludes, "They're heroes. Heroes in every sense of the word."

Red Cross Honors Worthy Heroes

Recently, the Benton Franklin Chapter of the American Red Cross hosted its annual Real Heroes Breakfast, where community heroes were honored for their selflessness and heroism. With 10 categories of awards, a total of 31 people were awarded for their heroics. A number of those heroes deserve to be honored here as well.



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The Adult Good Samaritan Award was given to Clarence Zimmer, a man who opened up his home to a homeless Army veteran. The veteran had been diagnosed with terminal cancer and was fighting an infection when he was discovered by Zimmer at the Union Gospel Mission in Pasco County, Florida.

The Community Organization Award went to Spencer Oland from Benton City, Washington, for the creation of the nonprofit Generation of Warriors Project, a program that encourages veterans to aid one another in post-traumatic stress and other combat-related disorders.

Matt Felton and Dan Edwards earned the 911 Rescue Award for applying their Eagle Scout Training when necessary. Having witnessed a truck crash on a backcountry road, Edwards and Felton secured the driver, who had been thrown from his truck during the crash, kept his airway open, and kept him covered in blankets until the paramedics arrived.

Ron Hopkins, Scott Williams, Jeff Yerbich, Jimmy Hagans, Matthew Smith, Nick Kraft, Gary Marmes, Jr., Jay Bennett, and Tyson Cole earned the Animal Rescue Award and proved that Christian love spreads to all of God's creatures. The group of people discovered that a horse had fallen into an abandoned cistern in Kohlotus, Washington, and brought sledge hammers, picks, and other equipment to chip away at the exposed rock well. They then created a ramp, allowing the horse to walk out.

Homeless Heroes Provoke Community Charity

Homeless couple Joseph Edwards and his wife, Bernice Gonzales, will be honored in March by the American Red Cross in Fresno, California, for saving the lives of several people whose car crashed into Bear Creek and became submerged.

Huddled under the G Street Bridge over Bear Creek on December 17 at half past midnight, Edwards and Gonzales were trying to stay warm and dry during a rainstorm. The couple observed a Volkswagen Beetle carrying four young adults go off the road and into the creek, landing upside down in the water.

"I was scared," said Edwards. "I was really scared for those people in the car."

However, Edwards did not allow his fear to impede him from helping. With the windows of the vehicle already shattered, Edwards helped the people, including an unconscious occupant, get out of the car and safely to the side of the creek.

"I just kept hearing a lady screaming," Edwards explained. "I just dove in the water. I didn't really think about it."

In the meantime, Gonzales phoned the police.

Members of the community nominated Edwards and Gonzales for the American Red Cross Central Valley Good Samaritan Award. The couple is also being honored by the Carnegie Hero Fund - Commission.

Best of all, local residents took up enough donations to help the couple rent an apartment, proving that no good deed goes unnoticed.

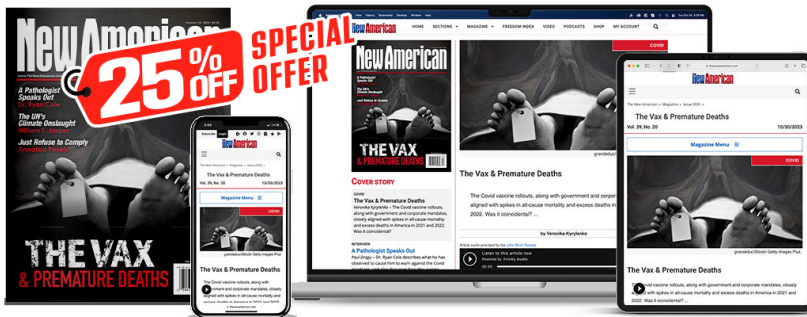


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