



NEWS RELEASE

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Firefighter Aids Survivor's Path to Healing

May 25, 2013 is a day that will never be forgotten by Patricia Rocha and her family. Patricia, a resident of Rancho Cucamonga, and her family were fishing from their anchored boat on the Colorado River near Pirates Cove when they were struck by a fast moving boat, sending the second vessel flying over the top of their boat; injuring all six occupants (3 adults and 3 juveniles), two sustaining life-threatening injuries.

One of the seriously injured was Patricia herself. She has endured 23 surgeries already with 1 more to go, and years of physical and mental healing. Feeling stronger physically and mentally, she recently reached out to thank the firefighters and medics who helped save her life and that of her nephew.

One of her heroes is Tom Marshall, the Fire Captain in charge at the incident. On June 9, the two came together for an emotional reunion. While speaking with Tom, Patricia stated she had tried unsuccessfully to get back on the water as the trauma of the incident still haunted her. Being an avid boater himself, Tom wanted to help her any way he could, so he offered to take her out on the water on his personal boat.

The following day, the two met in Topock, a short distance from where the boating accident occurred. Also present was then SBCoFire Limited Term Firefighter Lane McGivern (now a Firefighter with LA County Fire) and Paramedics Kevin Morgan and Mike Lowenthal Jr. from Baker Ambulance, a few of the emergency medical personnel on scene that horrific evening. Following an emotional exchange, Patricia walked onto Tom's boat; a moment they will both remember and cherish. They went for an hour long ride.

Patricia Rocha stated, "I did not expect this type of reaction from Tom & the others. I was overwhelmed with positive emotions. Meeting them filled a void in me that I did not even know I had. I believe God led me to reunite with them which gave me so much comfort. I felt so safe and protected."

"This was a very emotional day for all of us," stated Division Chief Tom Marshall. "Many times we don't hear the final outcome from medical calls and incidents we respond to. When Patricia contacted me, I was overwhelmed with emotion and elated that she and her family survived the tragedy. Patricia's journey back from such a horrendous accident is nothing short of amazing. I'm just glad I was able to be a small part of it."

Incident Background

On May 25, 2013, at about 7:15 p.m., firefighters responded to Site 5 at Park Moabi/Pirates Cove, to render medical aid to several people who had been injured in a boating accident.

Patricia's brother had witnessed the accident from land and immediately took action. Once he reached the accident, he was able to drive the boat with its victims to the shoreline in Park Moabi.

A Sheriff's Lieutenant arrived on scene first, advising firefighters of the severity of the injuries. Two medic helicopters were immediately ordered. Firefighters arrived on scene shortly after and administered life-saving medical treatment. Two of the injured were flown to trauma centers in Las Vegas, while the other four were taken by ground ambulance to a local hospital. There were no injuries sustained by the occupants of the other boat.

**Tom Marshal is now Division Chief of Division 5, which encompasses the South Desert and River Battalions of the County.*