

2017 "Firefighter of the Year" Award Recipients Alphabetically by Fire Department

Who is receiving which award is generally embargoed until the day of the event.

The Governor and the Secretary presented 33 awards: three Norman Knight Awards for Excellence in Community Service, five Individual Awards for Meritorious Conduct, eight Group Awards for Meritorious Conduct to teams of firefighters, 15 Medals of Valor to individual firefighters, and one Medal of Honor to Watertown Firefighter Joseph Toscano, posthumously. The Stephen D. Coan Fire Marshal Award was presented to the Western Massachusetts Safety and Fire Education Association.

ORDER

BOSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

TECHNICAL RESCUE

Nominee(s):

Lieutenant Edward J. Glasheen
Lieutenant Michael F. O'Connor
Acting Lieutenant Stephen V. Mark
Firefighter Robert E. Barrett
Firefighter William G. Carey
Firefighter Sean Connolly
Firefighter Gary R. Dardia

Firefighter Ronald J. Holmes
Firefighter Brian J. Kirk
Firefighter Nathaniel C. LeBlanc
Firefighter Michael J. McManus
Firefighter James T. Nee
Firefighter Sean D. Shea

Award(s): Group Citation; Valor (Glasheen)

In the early morning of August 19, 2016, members of the Technical Rescue Team responded to a scene in the financial district where a woman was on the ledge of a fifth-floor parking garage. The woman had climbed over the railing and was sitting on a cement ledge. As firefighters and others tried to speak with her, the Special Unit arrived and deployed an air bag directly below her, while firefighters prepared the rope rescue system. When a member again tried to speak with the woman, she stood up and appeared ready to jump. It was at that moment, that Lt. Edward Glasheen lunged over the railing and grabbed the woman under her arms, hauling her up to safety. This rescue was a well synchronized operation that tested the skills of the technical rescue companies on scene.

BRAINTREE FIRE DEPARTMENT

TECHNICAL RESCUE

Nominee(s):

Lieutenant James Lochiatto
Firefighter Mark McCabe
Firefighter Keith Walsh

Award(s): Valor

When the crew from Engine 3 arrived at the Lincoln Street Water Tower on December 15, 2016, they found a young man frantically calling for help on top of a 100-foot water tank. Without proper safety equipment readily available, Lt. Lochiatto and Firefighter Walsh climbed to the top and discovered two people inside the tank in 75-feet of water. The diver, was unresponsive and his co-worker, a spotter,

had jumped in without the proper gear, and was holding him. The 14-year-old male calling for help was having a panic attack and suffering from hypothermia. After getting the boy to safety, members secured the diver to the interior ladder with rope.

Now on the roof, Lt. Lochiatto, Firefighter Walsh and Firefighter McCabe, rescued the co-worker from the cold water and built a rope safety system to lower him to the ground. At this point, it was determined that getting the diver was now a recovery mission. After briefing command staff, these officers stayed on scene for approximately 18-hours until the diver was recovered. The conditions that day were frigid with 45 mph winds and temperatures as low as 3-degrees. It was later learned that the teenage boy was the son of the diver, who also had a nine-year-old daughter living in Texas.

BROCKTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

BUILDING FIRE

Nominee(s):

Lieutenant Christopher O'Reilly
Firefighter Zachary S. Davis

Firefighter Benjamin Denny
Firefighter Victor A. Soto-Perez

Award(s): Citation, Valor (O'Reilly, Davis)

Leaving the Westgate Mall on March 28 while on assignment, the members of Ladder Co. 1 saw smoke coming from the rear of a nearby apartment complex. Before they could radio it in, a Box Alarm came in for a building fire.

The first company on scene, Ladder 1 headed to the direction of the smoke, and saw an elderly man coming out of a sliding glass door onto the balcony of his third floor apartment. Heavy smoke and fire began to follow him through the open sliding door.

Lt. O'Reilly ordered his crew to position a ground ladder to this location. As he started to climb up the ladder, the man was now on the floor of the balcony and entangled with the plastic furniture. Firefighter Davis followed with Firefighter Denny right behind with a water extinguisher. Once on the third floor, Lt. O'Reilly and Firefighter Davis climbed over the balcony to lift the man back over to Firefighter Denny and then to Firefighter Soto-Perez who got him to safety. Lt. O'Reilly and Firefighter Davis both suffered first and second degree burns and were treated at a local hospital and then the MGH Burn Unit.

BROOKLINE FIRE DEPARTMENT

BUILDING FIRE

Nominee(s):

Captain Kevin Francis
Firefighter James Clinton

Award(s): Valor

On November 8, 2016, firefighters responded to a two-alarm fire in a triple decker, and quickly learned that residents may be trapped on the third floor. Captain Francis and Firefighter Clinton entered the building and started up the stairs with zero visibility. The fire was on the rear exterior of the building and had burned the roof of the back porch. The entry way to the third floor looked like a small closet but was really a stairway. Once on the third floor, they found a woman drifting in and out of consciousness. They carried her down three flights of stairs to safety.

Captain Francis and Firefighter Clinton then went back into the building up to the third floor for reports of more people trapped. After a search with no one found they exited. The woman was treated for smoke inhalation and carbon monoxide but made a full recovery. She is a plastic surgeon from China researching technologies to better treat burn victims at a local hospital.

CAMBRIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT

BUILDING FIRE

Nominee(s):

Members of Group 3:

Deputy Chief Michael J. Morrissey
Act. Deputy Chief Raymond E. Vaillancourt
Captain Charles M. Anderson
Captain Philip G. Arsenault
Captain Charles F. Murphy
Lieutenant Brian D. Albert
Lieutenant Thomas G. Cauchon
Lieutenant Michael A. Donovan
Lieutenant James A. Drewicz
Lieutenant Robert J. Jutras
Lieutenant David B. McKinley
Lieutenant Christopher J. Melendy
Lieutenant Kyle M. Schweinshaut
Act. Lieutenant Hugh F. Devlin
Act. Lieutenant Shawn P. Flanagan
Act. Lieutenant Ameer A. Moustafa
Act. Lieutenant John T. Pasquarello
Firefighter Matthew E. Ansello
Firefighter Murphy Aquaro
Firefighter William Barry Jr.
Firefighter Zachary J. Bennett
Firefighter Renrick R. Clarke
Firefighter Laura J. Coipel
Firefighter Stephanie Crayton
Firefighter James M. Encalada
Firefighter Tyler D. English

Firefighter Silvio Estrada
Firefighter Richard M. Feliciano
Firefighter Reed M. Frailey
Firefighter Patrick D. Headley
Firefighter Richard Rycroft Jr.
Firefighter Jeffrey C. Keefe
Firefighter James B. Kennedy
Firefighter Stephon B. Kinn
Firefighter John L. Magee
Firefighter Shayne McDonald
Firefighter Kyle J. McLaughlin
Firefighter John J. McMahan
Firefighter R. Nicholas Menard
Firefighter Cameron R. Moyer
Firefighter Daniel A. Nugent
Firefighter Clemente J. Pinto
Firefighter Jon W. Powers
Firefighter Richard Rycroft Jr.
Firefighter Adam M. Shuman
Firefighter Charles M. Stewart
Firefighter Robert F. Sullivan
Firefighter Aaron Young
Firefighter/Aide Robert A. Bruno
Firefighter/Aide Henry A. Sisco Jr.

Award(s): Group Citation

On Saturday afternoon, December 3, 2016, multiple calls were received for numerous building fires on Berkshire Street in East Cambridge. On arrival firefighters were faced with one building already collapsed and multiple cars burning. Realizing the severity of the scene, Deputy Chief Morrissey immediately struck multiple alarms while still assigning responding units into the best locations. Firefighters battled the 10-alarm blaze for several hours, with the flames still burning at 11 p.m. Twenty-five communities responded with mutual aid.

Flames extended to as many as 11 buildings in the area. One of the buildings was an old church that has been converted to apartment buildings, but most of the buildings were 3-story homes.

While the amount of devastation was enormous, there was no loss of life and injuries were minimal. More than 100 people were displaced. Eighteen buildings sustained varying levels of damage. One of the buildings collapsed, while others suffered partial collapse. Loss was estimated at \$40-million. The cause was improperly discarded smoking materials by workers on a construction site where no smoking should have been allowed.

DOUGLAS FIRE DEPARTMENT

DROWNING

Nominee(s): Lieutenant Gerard Connell

Award(s): Citation

Fire and police responded to a call for a missing swimmer on Memorial Day weekend (May 27, 2017) at the Whittin Reservoir in the Douglas State Forest. The cove is in a very remote part of the state forest and the terrain made access very difficult. As paramedics, police and fire got to work, Firefighter Connell put on a wet suit, and entered the frigid water and began searching for the missing 18-year-old woman. After 25-minutes, he located her in approximately 6-feet of water and helped to pull her out, before the District 7 Dive Team arrived. She was transported to Hubbard Hospital in Webster and pronounced dead, just one week before she was set to graduate high school.

HOLYOKE FIRE DEPARTMENT

BUILDING FIRE, FATALITIES

Nominee(s):

Deputy Chief David O'Connor
Captain James Cadigan
Lieutenant Philip Kraus
Firefighter Anthony Deroy

Firefighter Lawrence Jackson Jr.
Firefighter Daniel Spafford
Firefighter James Tourigny

Award(s): Group Citation, Valor (*Truck 1* - Deroy, Kraus, Spafford)

Car 21, Engine 1 and Truck 1 were first to arrive on scene to a 5-story apartment building fire on New Year's Day. Residents were visibly distraught and trapped inside the building as heavy fire and smoke could be seen on the top floors. Engine 1 advanced a hand line into the northeast side of the building to the third floor, while Truck 1 went to the other side and quickly rescued six residents from the third and fourth floors by ladder. Truck 1 then moved the ladder to the north side and rescued one additional resident. All on-duty members of the department battled this blaze, with help from surrounding communities. An electrical fault has been blamed for the fire that killed three people and left 50 more homeless.

HYANNIS FIRE DEPARTMENT

BOATING ACCIDENT

Nominee(s):

Captain William Rex
Lieutenant Jeff Lamothe
Lieutenant David Webb
Firefighter Wendy Austin
Firefighter John Dailey

Firefighter Paul Medeiros
Firefighter Chris Murphy
Firefighter Pete Nagorka
Firefighter Kyle Wiley

Award(s): Group Citation

It was a choppy evening on the waters of Cape Cod on June 16, when a high-speed ferry coming from Nantucket hit a jetty in Hyannis, injuring 15 of the 57 passengers and crew onboard. Firefighter Wiley first called Mayday in, and the Hyannis fire boat was first on the scene and then took command of the situation, working with the U.S. Coast Guard and local agencies. None of the injuries were life-threatening and the passengers were transported off by helicopter or boat.

LAWRENCE FIRE DEPARTMENT

BUILDING FIRE

Nominee(s): Firefighter Peter Humphrey

Award(s): Citation

When Engine 5 and Ladder 5 arrived at a house fire in a multi-family home, there was heavy fire blowing out of the third floor. Firefighter Humphrey immediately noticed a woman on the second floor roof holding onto the third floor window. He quickly placed a 24-foot extension ladder and started up. He found her, clutching to the window sill, scared and shaking. It was an illegal apartment with no smoke alarm, no second means of escape, and the headboard propped up against the window. In her haste to escape the fire, she had not gotten dressed. Firefighter Humphrey calmly explained that they needed to leave now and moved her to the edge of the roof and got on the ladder, holding her in a bear hug wrapped in his coat, as he carried her down to safety. She was transported to the hospital for minor smoke inhalation and burns.

LOWELL FIRE DEPARTMENT

BUILDING FIRE

Nominee(s):

Captain Robert Beane
Lieutenant Sean Quealy

Firefighter Michael Dexter
Firefighter Matthew Newell

Award(s): Group Citation

It was a cold winter morning on February 17 when Engine 2 and Ladder 2 responded to a house fire that quickly became a 3-alarm fire. There was heavy smoke coming from all floors and the first-floor kitchen was fully engulfed. A neighbor told firefighters that a 3-year old boy was trapped on the first floor. The rear door was blocked by two stacked air conditioners and there was heavy smoke on the other side of the door. The only way into the house was through a window. Members crawled through the window and searched the room until they ran out of air and others could take over. Meanwhile the room was filled with intense heat and smoke.

Engine 2 ran out of water and the nearest hydrant was frozen. At that point, Lt. Quealy found the child on the floor underneath a mirror that had fallen. The child was not breathing and was carried to the street where CPR was performed. He was taken to Lowell General Hospital Paramedics where he later died.

LOWELL FIRE DEPARTMENT

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Nominee(s): Firefighter Kevin Jones

Award(s): Norman Knight Award for Excellence in Community Service

It's a growing epidemic and sadly overdoses are part of the routine calls for most firefighters. The opioid crisis has thrust firefighters into a new reality where they often go to a call for a drug overdose. Firefighter Jones is a founding team member of Lowell's Community Opioid Outreach (CO-OP) Program, which consists of a police officer, EMT, outreach specialist and him. The team is proactive, reaching out to the homeless and people who just overdosed to help them start the recovery process. Most aren't ready, so the team keeps a database of opioid users so that when that person is ready, they can help steer them in the right direction. The CO-OP Team visits with people during and after rehabilitation. They educate their peers on best practices. In the year and a half since this program has started, Lowell has seen a tremendous decrease in fatal opioid overdoses. In the first six months of 2016, the city had 40 reported fatal opioid overdoses. That number dropped to 22 for the last half of 2016, when the program was in place.

MANSFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT

BUILDING FIRE, FATALITY

Nominee(s):

Captain John Terry
Firefighter/Paramedic Justin Sliney

Award(s): Medal of Valor

On March 8, firefighters received a master box activation for 21 East Street, a wood-framed building with 12 condominiums and no sprinkler system. Upon arrival the first crew found smoke and fire were coming from a first-floor apartment. Captain Terry and Firefighter/Paramedic Sliney entered the burning apartment and were immediately met with zero visibility and heavy black smoke that forced them to their stomachs. As they searched through the apartment, firefighters ventilated the windows and finally extinguished the fire to gain some visibility. At that point, Firefighter Sliney found a woman on the floor, and helped get her out of the building. She was conscious but had serious burns on her mouth, throat and hands.

The 7-person crew went back into the building to search the second floor for other victims. From the time of the box alarm to extinguishing the fire was 13-minutes. The small crew was able to contain the fire to the single apartment. Unfortunately, the woman succumbed to her injuries six days later.

MIDDLEBOROUGH FIRE DEPARTMENT

RESCUE

Nominee(s): Chief Lance Benjamino

Award(s): Citation

On April 14, Middleborough Chief Benjamino was chaperoning his son's school trip to Switzerland. They were visiting Mount Pilatus in Lucerne, when a student moved too close to the edge and slipped, falling 250-feet down the steep mountainside. He came to rest on a ledge but because of the fog the group couldn't see him. Chief Benjamino started down the mountain slope with very low visibility, losing his footing and falling about 150-feet and then crawling slowly to the student. Once he was with the student, he treated his injuries as best he could and worked with the tour guide to notify rescue officials. This proved challenging due to language barriers. Once the rescue crew arrived, the equipment was inadequate, and the only option was for the Chief to secure the student onto the board and inch the board up the rough mountain side on unstable terrain approximately 150-feet. After the 90-minute ordeal, Chief Benjamino and the rescue crew carried the student through a quarter mile tunnel and down a gondola to a waiting helicopter. The student did spend time in the hospital but made a full recovery.

NORWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT

BUILDING FIRE

Nominee(s):

Lieutenant Jeffrey Campilio

Firefighter George Burton

Award(s): Medal of Valor

On February 3, Group 1 responded to a fire at a large apartment complex. The units were row townhouses. A resident met the arriving crew and directed them to the unit next to hers. Norwood police helped to evacuate adjoining units while firefighters put primary and backup hand lines in place and got the water supply ready. It was a coordinated team effort as the Engine 3 crew went into the apartment and found the kitchen on fire. With zero visibility and high heat, Lt. Campilio believed that the fire was under control and directed crew upstairs and to the attic area to check for fire extensions. After some of the smoke had cleared from the first floor he found an unconscious man in front of the living room couch. Firefighter Burton helped bring the male to the door for CPR. Lt. Campilio and Firefighter Burton went back into the building to search for others and found a second victim tangled in electrical wire from the entertainment system. They carefully untangled the unconscious woman and brought her out the door.

Both residents were taken to the hospital, and both made full recoveries. There were initial reports of two children being in the house, but thankfully they were at a sleepover that evening.

PITTSFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT**BUILDING FIRE, FATALITY****Nominee(s):**

Lieutenant Michael D'Avella
Probationary Firefighter Jarrett Robitaille

Award(s): Citation

On December 8, 2016, several units of the Pittsfield Fire Department responded to an early morning building fire. Smoke was visible on two sides. As crews worked to secure a hose line, tenants reported they believed someone was trapped on the second floor. Engine 5 immediately made entry and found dense smoke and zero visibility. They used thermal imaging to search the rooms and located an unconscious elderly man. Lieutenant D'Avella and Probationary Firefighter Robitaille removed him and carried him down the stairs where other crew helped to carry him outside. Unfortunately, the male later succumbed to his injuries 10 days later.

**TURNERS FALLS FIRE DEPARTMENT
GILL FIRE DEPARTMENT****DROWNING****Nominee(s):**

Captain Michael Currie
Firefighter Eric Vassar

Award(s): Citation

On July 16, 2016, off-duty Turners Falls Captain Currie was in Deerfield ready to start his daily run when he heard the report of a water emergency near the bike path bridge spanning the Connecticut River. Captain Currie parked and ran a quarter mile to the bridge where he found a person waving for help, and then went to the area where bystanders were and saw what looked like a person submerged in water approximately 30-feet from shore. Gill Firefighter Vassar, also off-duty, had arrived and both men jumped into the river – without any gear – and brought the person to shore and started CPR. Unfortunately, the victim passed away at the hospital shortly thereafter.

UXBRIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT**EDUCATION**

Nominee(s): Deputy Chief Steven R. Tancrell

Award(s): Norman Knight Award for Excellence in Community Service

After a few of the combination carbon monoxide/smoke alarms had failed inspection during real estate transactions he conducted, Deputy Tancrell looked closely and found that the faulty detectors were all the same model. This started an investigation several months long where he contacted the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services, the US Consumer Product Safety Commission and the manufacturer Kidde to get to the root of the problem. At issue was a "single chirp," that most owners took to mean it was time to replace the battery, which they did and then tested the device once before putting it back up. Kidde said the chirp was indication that the detector was at the end of life; however, people were continuing to use it because it tested correctly for them after the battery was changed. Deputy Tancrell kept pursuing this issue

and in total found 13 faulty detectors. Kidde issued a nationwide recall in the United States and Canada. Deputy Tancrell's persistence prevented untold tragedies nationwide. He uses this to educate residents about smoke and CO alarm safety and maintenance.

WATERTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT

LINE OF DUTY DEATH

Nominee(s): Firefighter Joseph A. Toscano

Award(s): Medal of Honor, (posthumously)

On March 17, firefighters reported to the scene of a structure fire that became a second alarm fire. Heavy smoke and fire was visible, and it was unknown if there was anyone in the house. Firefighter Toscano went in to help with the interior breakdown and then came out when he was out of air. After switching out his air bottle, he re-entered the house. He collapsed at the scene and was immediately brought to an awaiting ambulance. He succumbed to his injuries and was pronounced dead at the hospital, from a heart attack. Firefighter Toscano, 54, was a 21-year veteran of the department. He was the father of five children, ages 12 to 19, and lived with his wife and children in Randolph.

WELLESLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT

EDUCATION

Nominee(s): Lieutenant Paul Delaney

Award(s): Norman Knight Award for Excellence in Community Service

Lieutenant Delaney has been working with the youth and seniors of Wellesley for the past 17 years as the S.A.F.E. and Senior SAFE educator. He teaches thousands of students about fire prevention each school year. In the summer, he helps students from greater Boston learn about the fire service and gain life skills in a weeklong program. Lt. Delaney has also presented at many fire education conferences mentoring others and sharing his presentations on the Cocoon Grove and Our Lady of Angels fires he uses to combine teaching history and fire safety. Lt. Delaney also works with those young at heart through the Council on Aging, teaching senior's important safety messages. Lt. Delaney was part of the crew that made a nationally recognized ice rescue and just last summer Paul saved a young mother while he was vacationing on a Cape Cod beach by performing CPR.

**WESTWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT
CANTON FIRE DEPARTMENT
DEDHAM FIRE DEPARTMENT
NORWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT
WALPOLE FIRE DEPARTMENT**

PLANE CRASH

Nominee(s):

Westwood Fire Department:

Captain/Paramedic Richard Cerullo
Lieutenant/EMT Michael Ford
Firefighter/Paramedic Ian Brown
Firefighter/Paramedic Michael Crawford
Firefighter/Paramedic Robert Kilroy
Firefighter/Paramedic Jordan Morgan
Firefighter/Paramedic Craig Templeton

Canton Fire Department:

Captain/EMT Wendel Robery
Firefighter/EMT John Buckley
Firefighter/Paramedic Keith Flavin
Firefighter/EMT Jeff O'Brien

Dedham Fire Department:

Lieutenant/EMT Michael Huff
Firefighter Steven Burke
Firefighter/EMT Justin Callaghan
Firefighter Kevin O'Brien

Norwood Fire Department:

Lieutenant/EMT David Hayes
Firefighter/Paramedic George Burton
Firefighter/Paramedic Brian Donoghue
Firefighter/Paramedic Chris Fuller
Firefighter/EMT Nick Murphy
Firefighter/Paramedic Pat Moloney

Walpole Fire Department:

Lieutenant/Paramedic David Emswiler
Firefighter/Paramedic Donavan Minutolo
Firefighter/EMT Thomas Morandi
Firefighter/Paramedic Christopher Shea

Award(s): Group Citation

It was a hot afternoon on July 16, 2016 when fire and police responded to a plane crash in a heavily wooded area of Westwood, a few miles away from Norwood Airport. The location was extremely difficult and required all rescue equipment – including hose-lines, fire extinguishers, chain saws, portable extrication equipment – be carried in by members in full gear. Fire and police worked together to reach the crash site and remove a large tree that had fallen directly on the small plane. Then, they cut the roof of the aircraft and removed the first person from the plane and out of the woods, all within 17 minutes from first arrival. Crews from Canton, Dedham, Norwood and Walpole Fire Departments provided mutual aid that led to the rapid extrication of the second person and out of the woods. The pilot has serious injuries but made a full recovery. Unfortunately, the passenger, age 77, from Norwood, succumbed to his injuries a few days later.

WESTERN MA SAFETY AND FIRE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

AWARENESS

Nominee(s):

Lieutenant Katherine Collins-Kalbaugh, Chicopee Fire
Firefighter Laurie Rocco, Palmer Fire
Lieutenant Maria Pelchar, Holyoke Fire
Firefighter Greg Dibrindisi, Hatfield Fire
Firefighter Pam Murphy, Agawam Fire
Firefighter Craig Bodamer, Belchertown Fire
Firefighter Edwin McGlew, Hatfield Fire
Firefighter Natalie Stollmyer, Northampton Fire
Firefighter Meaghan Ahearn, Orange Fire
District Chief William Judd, South Hadley Fire, ret.
Lieutenant Jason Houle, South Hadley Fire District #1

Firefighter Evan Briant, South Hadley Fire District #1
Firefighter Donald May, South Hadley Fire District #2
Lisa Anderson, Southwick Fire
Russell Anderson, Southwick Fire
Lieutenant Neil Hawley, Springfield Fire, ret.
Firefighter Willie Spears, Springfield Fire
Firefighter Pablo Flores, Springfield Fire
Firefighter Warren Barnett, Springfield Fire
Deputy Edward Wloch, Ware Fire
Loren Davine, NoFIRES
Angela Erti, Angela's Imprints
Kelly, BMC Healthnet

Award(s): Stephen D. Coan Fire Marshal Award

The Western Massachusetts Safety and Fire Education Association is a volunteer group of active and retired fire and life safety professionals that work together to educate the public about fire safety and burn prevention. Their mission is to prevent fire-related deaths and prevent accidents, injuries and disabilities.

They help each other staff local fire safety events, child passenger seat safety checks, bike rodeos, and an educational booth for all 17 days of the fair at the Big E, reaching 1.5 million visitors each year. They organize an annual visit to the Shriners Hospital for Children in Springfield and have worked with the American Red Cross and the state Department of Public Health's smoke alarm installation programs. They hold special station tours for children and adults with autism. They have an active social media presence to further their educational messages.