

Dispatcher of the Year

Joe Patino

San Diego Fire-Rescue Department

San Diego Fire-Rescue has the honor of nominating Fire Dispatcher Joe Patino for Dispatcher of the Year. Joe is a seasoned veteran here at SDFD and is known for his calm demeanor, professionalism and competence. Joe has volunteered to train new dispatchers for many years. He is always willing to work with our new dispatchers; teaching them, mentoring them, and ensuring their success. Honestly, he's one of the few dispatchers that we can always count on to help train new dispatchers. It's safe to say that Joe has positively influenced and molded many "generations" of dispatchers. But what really sets Joe apart is his dedication to helping others with the unseen side of our job. The psychological side. Joe dedicates his time to the peer support program, Critical Incident Stress Management, and serves others as a Department Chaplain. Joe spends countless hours attending peer support and chaplaincy related training courses and conferences, frequently at his own expense and on his own time. Joe is selfless and always willing to drop everything and come in to help others. His dedication and service to others puts Joe in a class of his own! Deputy Chief Roger Fisher writes "Joe has come to management to frequently update on the success stories and appreciation from many dispatchers (including our newest dispatchers) regarding our wellness activities. Joe comes off as a seasoned, kind and caring dispatcher with many years of experience to share to his peers and to our newer dispatchers. We all have benefitted from Joe's words. Every dispatch center deserves employees like Joe." Another supervisor writes - " Joe has been selfless in his commitment to ECDC. He has always taken on extra responsibility with a smile on his face. All his contributions outside of his dispatching duties is a whole additional job in itself and through all that he always maintains a positive attitude. He is very passionate about his co-workers and that really shines through when it comes to his Chaplain duties. You can tell he cares. Joe definitely deserves the recognition." Not even the pandemic slowed Joe down. Tracy Lynn, Fire Dispatch Administrator, writes "During this trying time for the past year, Joe has personally taken care of his co-workers when they were in quarantine. He would call them daily to check on their wellbeing and mental health, grocery shop, and drop off meals for them and their families. All of this being done on his own time. Joe never let it impact his work schedule or his dedication to training new dispatchers. As part of the CISM team, Joe would also come in on his day off to assist dispatchers during debriefings after extremely difficult calls." His giving to others does not stop at work. Joe also gives his time to Scouting as well as his church. For these reasons we feel Joe Patino should receive the honor of "Dispatcher of the Year". Date of hire: 10/6/1997

Amanda "Mandie" Waterman

San Diego Community College District Police Department

Amanda "Mandie" Waterman is the dispatcher you can count on - everyday. Not just for one incident or here and there - but for that all day, everyday, top of her game, consistency! Mandie has been a dispatcher with College Police since 2010. She's also a Communications Training Officer and Backup Agency CLETS Coordinator. Mandie also volunteers for numerous projects including organizing one of the Department's most successful Burger Burns in support of an injured officer. Mandie was commended for her positive impact by second watch units and several members of the

Facilities Department. Described by the officers as “Unruffled and even tempered” over the radio, Mandie is knowledgeable and always has foresight. She continues to ensure officer safety and sound tactics. Facilities personal described her as, “Extremely patient and always willing to help. Even with the challenges of the new alarm system, Mandie does whatever she can.” Mandie’s dedication to teamwork and ongoing flexibility has not gone unnoticed. Graveyards can sometimes be a difficult shift to fill, especially with a small team. Mandie has graciously covered graveyards for 32 of the last 48 months. When four team members were unable to work or cover shifts, Mandie adjusted her schedule, including cancelling some of her already approved time off. Mandie truly cares about her fellow dispatchers. As an example, when she recognized one of her peers would be working an 11 day stretch, most of them 12 hour days, she put together a survival basket filled with energizing snacks and goodies to help them through the long days. Mandie truly is an asset to our Department. Her contributions to the Dispatch team exemplify and further the values and mission of the District, Department and Communications profession.

Jessie Hill
San Diego Sheriff’s Department

Jessie Hill has been a dispatcher for the San Diego Sheriff’s Department for 5 years. She holds an Intermediate POST Certificate and a bachelor’s degree in Justice Studies. Throughout her career, she has assumed various leadership roles and accomplished many tasks. In 2020 alone, she took on more roles and responsibilities than most dispatchers do their entire career. Jessie is a Lead Dispatcher working with supervisors on the overall efficient and effective operation of the Communications Center. She can be trusted with any supervisory task assigned to her. Her peers continue to look up to her as a leader and mentor. Jessie is also a Training Officer. She is responsible for providing instruction to trainees on both 9-1-1 and dispatch radios. Additionally, during a competitive process, Jessie was selected to become an academy instructor where she provides trainees with a solid foundation during an in-house academy before they are assigned to the dispatch floor. Jessie will create and present training to both new and current dispatchers. Jessie also teaches dispatchers from all over the state at the 120-hour POST Basic Dispatcher Academy. Jessie is a member of our Department Operations Center (DOC) dispatch team. She is assigned to work in the DOC during critical incidents. Jessie was the primary dispatcher when SDSO assumed radio communications during the La Mesa protests. She was calm and professional throughout. Jessie has been a part of the Tactical Dispatch Unit since 2019. She provides communications support for SWAT operations and serves on an on-call status responding to warrant services, Code 11s and mutual aid requests for other tactical teams. Jessie was selected to join our Department’s CAD Team in our search to select a new CAD product. She is responsible for documenting our specific needs, testing, evaluating, and scoring various CAD products. Jessie is a member of our Department’s Peer Support team. She is specially trained in active listening and understanding trauma. She is available to assist any peer in need at any time. Jessie is a member of the Recruiting Team where she participates in job fairs, recruiting events, and dispatcher testing. She is tasked with giving presentations at many events throughout the county. Jessie is a Terrorism Liaison Officer and has received special training on identifying and reporting potential terrorism and suspicious persons. You may recognize Jessie as she has been the face of the Sheriff’s Department on several news segments and social media posts. On top of this all, and most importantly, Jessie is a great co-worker and friend to all that know her. Her sweet demeanor and friendly attitude draw people in. She is well-liked by all. Jessie takes on more tasks and has more responsibilities than most dispatch supervisors. She is always available to help and take the lead on projects. Jessie is a highly competent dispatcher, trusted to do significant tasks always producing exceptional results. She is

truly an asset to the Sheriff's Communications Center and very deserving of the title Dispatcher of the Year.

Melinda Fairchild
North County Dispatch JPA

Melinda Fairchild has been selected as the 2020 Dispatcher of the Year for North County Dispatch JPA (NCDJPA). Melinda began her career with NCDJPA as a Fire Communications Dispatcher in June 2002 and was promoted to Fire Communications Supervisor in October 2005. Melinda has been described by her peers as knowledgeable, approachable, and calm. She's cognizant of the activity in the center and is quick to offer assistance when someone finds themselves overwhelmed. Her experience and abilities make her an asset to the supervisory team. Melinda encourages others to take on challenges and opportunities, even when the staff member may not realize the value they can bring to the situation. When NCDJPA procured a new scheduling system, Melinda played a key role in evaluating the capabilities of the systems under consideration and making the final determination. She also took on the primary role of configuring the new system. As the scheduling supervisor, she takes great pride in managing the Dispatch schedule and has been open to thinking outside the box when it comes to arranging coverage. She is also willing to adjust her schedule or volunteer to fill vacancies. Her approach ensures fairness to all. Melinda gets to know her staff, so she recognizes when they're not having a great day. She excels at providing comfort during hectic periods which reassures staff and gives them the confidence necessary to work through challenging situations. Melinda is playing a key part in the future of NCDJPA by creating a positive culture that values all staff members and allows us all to support one another. She is truly a valued member of the team and one that any agency would be lucky to have!

Emma Cabatu
National City Police Department

Someone who recognizes the need for physical and mental well-being in an increasingly stressful profession and creates ways to achieve it; that is Dispatcher Emma Cabatu. Since beginning her dispatch career in July 2019, Emma has generated fun and healthy activities for her dispatch family to destress and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Whether it is a monthly exercise challenge they can perform at their workstations, a distance challenge on the treadmill or making sure everyone drinks their water, Emma takes the physical health of the National City Police Dispatch Center seriously. She also strives to alleviate the stress in the room by playing pranks or joking with her partners, all of whom express how she lifts the mood in the Communications Center. In addition to caring for her partners' mental and physical well-being, Emma is a very good dispatcher. In a unit that routinely operates with just two dispatchers, Emma is a trusted and supportive partner. She provides training to her peers whenever she comes across a new procedure or finds an area that may need a little refreshing. She is a valuable resource to both her peers and the officers in the field. She performs extremely well in high stress situations and maintains a calm demeanor on both the radio and the phones. Emma has recently taken on the role of Communications Training Officer and looks forward to developing the future of the department. Emma is usually the first one through the door on her shift and is always willing to adjust, work extra, come in on her day off, and support the unit with their ever changing scheduling needs. Per her supervisor, she is a true reflection of a team player. This year, Emma was selected as an Explorer Advisor for the department. Emma transitioned to dispatch from the patrol division where she experienced firsthand how to work in the field. Now, as a dispatcher, she sees the behind the scenes and what information we need in order to send the

appropriate help. Emma is an amazing person and a privilege to supervise. Her smile and positive attitude are contagious and she truly does make coming to work much more enjoyable. It is my honor to nominate Dispatcher Emma Cabatu for the San Diego Association of Public Safety Dispatchers Dispatcher of the Year Award.

Megan Barahura
San Diego State University Police Department

The San Diego State University Police Department nominates dispatcher and communications training officer, Megan Barahura, for the Dispatcher of the Year award. Megan is a tenured dispatcher, consistently going above and beyond for her colleagues and her community. Megan is a true professional, has a strong sense of duty and is passionate about her profession. She is a wonderful representation of our agency's values. Megan is our most senior communications training officer and selflessly gives her time, whether formally training or not, to offer guidance and support to trainees and her colleagues. She continuously educates herself to be knowledgeable in her field and takes pride in her work and performance. Megan values efficiency and takes the initiative to find ways to improve upon procedures and workflows within our center. She uses time on her shift to revise and update manuals, identify new training opportunities, and assist her peers and supervisors with tasks or projects that will improve operations within our center. Megan is a great asset to our team. She actively contributes to our center to help complete tasks, meet goals and maintain our positive reputation. Megan works hard to maintain a strong rapport with her colleagues throughout the department and within our center. She has a positive attitude, listens to her teammates, respects their individuality and communicates well with anyone she interacts with. Megan is the epitome of a team player. She holds not only herself accountable, but her colleagues as well. She is flexible and always willing to help others for the betterment of the team. Megan has a true passion for dispatching and her enthusiasm for dispatching is contagious. Megan consistently exceeds expectations and is an excellent role model for her peers. She is a critical thinker, thorough, proactive and resourceful in her work. Throughout her career at SDSU PD, Megan has single handedly coordinated emergency services personnel response to high priority incidents. She has had to simultaneously work as a call taker and radio dispatcher managing not only highly stressed callers, but responding officer safety and operational considerations. Megan's colleagues have often praised her for being calm and competent; expressing their appreciation for her concern for the safety of both officers and the public alike. Megan is not only an asset to our department, but an asset to the dispatching profession. She constantly strives to build a positive perception of dispatchers, and serves not only our department, but the entire public safety dispatching community as a whole.

April Bowen
Carlsbad Police Department

April Bowen exemplifies the best in public safety dispatching. She excels at working critical and high stress incidents and has demonstrated consistent keenness for the safety of officers and citizens alike. She displays professionalism and courtesy with everyone. She is an excellent multi-tasker and team player. She is proactive in anticipating the needs of officers in the field and she demonstrates exemplary teamwork with her dispatch and patrol squad partners. This year, April assisted the Communications Manager with ideas and ordering supplies for gift baskets to help acknowledge and

celebrate National Telecommunications Week, while still adhering to the County Health Order restrictions in place due to COVID19. She continued to be a positive and compassionate department representative by continuing to manage the special occasion cards that are sent out on behalf of the Communications Division. The cards acknowledge significant events such as birthdays, sympathy, get well, and congratulations, to departmental employees as well as outside Law Enforcement Agencies. April is a member of the Peer Support Team and she spearheaded a new project to place a post card in employee mailboxes after working a traumatic incident as a gesture of caring and to provide a reminder of available counselling and services available through Peer Support. As a dispatcher, April is the first person a member of our community might contact to report an emergency. Obtaining vital information from people in crisis can be incredibly challenging. April's role is vital to our overall success in Patrol. April excels in this role; often laying the groundwork for de-escalation where needed as we respond. Her commitment to the community is reflected in the sincerity of her professionalism. She treats everyone involved with dignity and respect regardless of the circumstances. Her compassion for our citizens in their time of need has been extraordinary, and her consideration and support for her co-workers as a member of peer support has been exemplary. April Bowen embodies the mission, vision and values of our agency, and it is our honor and privilege to nominate her for the 2020 Dispatcher of the Year award.