

2019 Dispatcher of the Year Nominees

Scott Leard – San Diego Harbor Police Dept.

Lead Public Safety Dispatcher Scott Leard has been an integral piece of the Communications Team for 25 years. He was a part of the second round of hiring for the first ever civilian dispatchers at the Harbor Police. He helped build HPD Communications from the ground up and his skill and resilience have stood the test of time. Scott can manage any situation that comes his way. He has a reputation for sounding calmer as incidents escalate. He maintains complete control and is always thinking ahead to ensure he is prepared for anything that may happen. He has built a solid foundation of trust and respect with his field partners. They have complete confidence that Scott will handle everything.

Scott has had a hand in training every dispatcher and the knowledge he has passed down is a benefit to all. His innate ability to act calmly and swiftly in an emergency sets him apart. He displays empathy and understanding with distraught callers. One example occurred at the end of 2018. A 9-1-1 transfer was received from an RP calling from Solana Beach trying to convey a medical emergency at the airport. The caller disconnected before the light duty officer who had answered the call could get an exact location. Scott recognized that the situation was out of the ordinary, so he cancelled his break, plugged in, and took over. He attempted to call back the RP with no answer. He then obtained the phone number for the patient. He was able to make contact and immediately built a rapport with him. Scott balanced complete control of the situation with a calm and empathetic tone. He asked clear and direct questions to find out the patient's exact location, physical description, and symptoms. He conveyed that help was on the way, remaining on the line until police officers arrived and made contact with the patient. It was later discovered that the original caller was transferred three times before reaching HPD. Without Scott's decisive action, beat knowledge, and calm control, help would have been delayed even more.

In addition to his regular duties, Scott is the facilities and technology Lead. He built and has maintained the current CAD system and is in the process of developing the new system. He has spent countless hours learning, planning, and executing the system configuration and build. He is focused on creating the best system possible with the entire workgroup in mind.

He is an innovative problem solver. He tackles issues with careful thought and decisive action. The Port of San Diego was the victim of a cyber-attack that took down all computer systems. Dispatchers were on a manual card system for ten days. Scott was instrumental in getting a stand-alone version of the CAD system up and running to bring some semblance of operational normalcy back to the comm center.

Scott Leard has helped to make Harbor Police Communications what it is today. His vast knowledge and technical skill are unmatched.

Elaine Winchell – La Mesa Police Dept.

It is my pleasure to nominate Dispatcher Elaine Winchell from La Mesa Police Department for Dispatcher of the Year for the San Diego Association of Public Safety Dispatchers.

Elaine has been a dispatcher for our department for an impressive 35 years, and is the most tenured employee in our entire department with a total of 37.5 years. Throughout her impressive career, she has received a total of 62 formal commendations. Elaine has been a Communications Training Officer for 31 years, and has played an instrumental role in creating, implementing and revising our Dispatch Trainee Manual. In addition, Elaine was a Tactical Dispatcher with our Special Response Team (SWAT) for 8 years, and single handedly wrote the Tactical Dispatcher Manual used by our team.

Elaine has steadily gone above and beyond in her service to our department and the community throughout her career. She volunteered to train our Retired Senior Volunteers in CLETS and Radio Operations. She was a POST Dispatch Academy Instructor. When our department switched from cards to Computer Aided Dispatch, Elaine was the Coordinator and Trainer for the CAD implementation project. She also stepped forward to act as the GIS Liaison between our CAD vendor and the city's GIS Consultant, to keep our GIS data up to date.

While her years of service and contributions throughout her career are extraordinary, Elaine's dependability and work ethic should also be commended. She is exceptionally reliable and trustworthy when performing all of the extensive duties required of her as a Police Dispatcher and Trainer. She shows conscientiousness and industriousness in fulfilling her job functions, often thinking "outside the box" to find creative solutions. Although Elaine does not desire overtime on her own, she is the first to volunteer to fill last minute overtime shifts due to sick callouts.

Elaine is a dedicated servant to Public Safety, and is undoubtedly deserving of this prestigious award.

Thank you for your consideration.

Angela Rodriguez – San Diego Community College

Angela began her career with the San Diego Community College Police department in November 2014 as a part time dispatcher. She was hired full time in June of 2016 and has continually and consistently demonstrated excellence in the work place.

Angela was selected as the Department Dispatcher of the Year in 2018 based in part on her many Citations and Commendations received. These include but are not limited to citations from field units, the Section Lieutenant and a Commendation from the Chief of Police. The acknowledgements all recognize Angela's commitment and dedication to the job. While many have referenced incidents encompassing hot or critical calls, suicides, evacuations, and mutual aid response actions, it is her continual exemplary performance and professionalism that are most often referenced. Throughout this year she has continued to perform her duties always remaining professional and keeping everyone safe.

In addition to her excellent dispatching skills, Angela has represented the San Diego Community College District and the Police Department at several Community outreach events such as "Coffee with Cops", has received a commendation for her participation in the Law Enforcement Torch Run, has completed her certification and delivered training as a Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) Instructor, and is active with the San Diego Association of Public Safety Dispatchers. In 2018 she successfully completed the POST Communications Training Officer course, and immediately began participating in the revision, development and implementation of the Department's Dispatcher Training Program. She has since that time successfully trained and mentored members of the dispatcher work group.

Angela's peers often comment on her teamwork, helpfulness and friendliness. She is often commended for her actions, dedication and professionalism. Comments such as "went above and beyond"; "exceptional work"; "we are confident and able to rely on her during a crisis" thoroughly impressed by several aspects of her work" and are just a few of the many quotations that have been attributed to Angela.

Additionally, Angela has been very active in the community. She continues to support causes and the law enforcement family with organization and participation in the Special Olympics Torch Run, The Children's Hospital Teddy Bear Drive, and previously as a Cheerleader/Dance Coordinator for the San Diego Enforcers raising over \$195,000.00 for various local charities.

It is our honor to recognize Angela Rodriguez for her continual support and dedication to the Department and to the profession of Public Safety Dispatching.

Shannon O'Neil Huntoon – San Diego Sheriff's Dept.

Shannon is a friendly, funny, and has a wealth of dispatching knowledge. She has served as an exemplary training officer for multiple trainees in all phases of training over the last year. She continually dedicates herself to their improvement and comes to work everyday with a fresh resolve. She is always willing to help others and does so in a professional manner with patience and a great attitude. Shannon consistently volunteers for auxiliary duties.

Beyond her normal work week Shannon serves as a CLETS and Inquiry Academy Instructor which further demonstrates her dedication and passion for teaching others. Her extensive CLETS knowledge is sought after by peers and supervisors alike.

Debra Ballard – San Diego Police Dept.

Police Lead Dispatcher Debra Ballard is a continual example of excellence. She has contributed significantly to the profession of public safety dispatching, as well as to the operations of the San Diego Police Department, not only throughout 2018, but prior to and beyond. She has lent assistance to other agencies as well.

Debra's job knowledge, technical skills and abilities are outstanding, and she is one of the finest examples of what a Lead Dispatcher, and any employee, for that matter, can aspire to be. She extends her experience, knowledge and skills to others by being a Communications Training Officer. She not only trains newly-promoted Lead Dispatchers, but she also trains dispatchers on working the Inquiry frequency.

Debra also self-initiated the development of an Inquiry class, as well as a Department Menu Class open to sworn officers, entitled "Bridging the Gap", which covered various topics to improve the efficiency and working relationship between patrol and dispatchers, and increase the familiarity of sworn personnel with the interworking of Communications Division. These classes have since been incorporated into all-Department training, where Debra herself conducts the training for the following on a regular basis:

- New Police Officer Recruits - after the Academy, just before Field Training
- New Sergeants during their Sergeant's Academy
- New Field Training Officers (FTOs) during their FTO Academy
- Refresher for Police Officer I's after Field Training, before going out on their own in Patrol

- New Police Investigative Service Officers (PISOs) during their Academy

Debra also developed an abbreviated version of the training as a refresher class for FTO's, and she participated in training videos created for both sworn and dispatch personnel, covering topics of Inquiry and Calling for Cover.

Upon request, Debra extended her training outside of SDPD, having conducted a class for Park Rangers. She also developed and taught an Inquiry class for Community College PD.

Since SDPD cut over to an entirely new CAD system in October of 2017, Debra to this day, continues to be a go-to person for everything CAD, by handling:

- Commonplace file maintenance
- Mapping maintenance
- Employee status/rank/radio changes
- Unit designator file maintenance
- Updated configuration
- Answers questions and troubleshoots technical issues
- Representing Communications at weekly CAD meetings
- Re-writing Department Procedures affected by the new CAD
- Assists the Department's CAD Team by handling trouble tickets that get sent to them

Debra is also a technical expert with the Division's VESTA phone system, and can handle issues that arise, saving response by AT&T technicians at times.

On the personal side of Debra, she went above and beyond attempting to help a fellow Department member when she found out that an officer was in need of a kidney. She didn't hesitate in getting tested to see if she would be a match, and she was. Unfortunately, the night before their surgeries, one last test determined that Debra was no longer a viable donor, but her determination through the process to save a life was unwavering.