



2025 Kindness Awards

Lifetime Kindness Award

Douglas Miller— Doug miller, a beloved local figure in the Laguna Beach community since the 1970s, is this year's recipient of the Lifetime Kindness Award. A Vietnam War veteran, husband, father, artist, photographer, historian and musician, Miller has always been known for his generosity and deep connections to the town. He has a diverse range of talents, including painting thousands of canvases, playing the violin in various bands, and documenting community life through photography. Since the 70's, one could always find Doug with his camera at local events, meticulously documenting everyone in his photographs, including the date and event, and storing them in a precise, library-like system. Following the tragic Laguna Beach fire on October 28, 1993, which destroyed nearly 400 homes and countless photos and memories, Doug went to work, recreating those lost memories for each homeowner with time and effort. Known for his continuous giving to local churches, nonprofit organizations, and veterans' services, a documentary about his life and work, titled *Sawdust and Sand*, has been screened at numerous events and film festivals.

Kindness Hero Awards

Mason Davis— Today we honor Mason Davis for his courage and quick thinking. On the evening of July 18, 2024, as cries for help echoed across Treasure Island Beach, Mason, just 16 years old, along with his friends Levi Mauga (19) and Tommy Zahalka (15) was among the first to recognize the immediate danger of a powerful rip current. Without hesitation, he grabbed his surfboard and paddled into the rough water toward a family in distress, with one swimmer already half-conscious. His swift response and bravery were crucial in reaching the most critical victim and keeping them safe until professional lifeguards arrived to complete the rescue. Mason's heroism exemplifies a true commitment to the well-being of his community.





Kindness Hero Awards

Levi Mauga— Today we honor Levi Mauga, for his courage and quick thinking. On the evening of July 18, 2024, as cries for help echoed across Treasure Island Beach, Levi, only 19 years old, along with his friends Mason Davis (16) and Tommy Zahalka (15), was among the first to recognize the immediate danger of a powerful rip current. Without hesitation, he grabbed his surfboard and paddled into the rough water toward a family in distress, with one swimmer already half-conscious. His swift response and bravery were crucial in reaching the most critical victim and keeping them safe until professional lifeguards arrived to complete the rescue. Levi's heroism exemplifies a true commitment to the well-being of his community.

Tommy Zahalka— Today we honor Tommy Zahalka for his courage and quick thinking. On the evening of July 18, 2024, as cries for help echoed across Treasure Island Beach, Tommy, at just 15 years old, along with his friends Levi Mauga (19) and Mason Davis (16), was among the first to recognize the immediate danger of a powerful rip current. Without hesitation, he grabbed his surfboard and paddled into the rough water toward a family in distress, with one swimmer already half-conscious. His swift response and bravery were crucial in reaching the most critical victim and keeping them safe until professional lifeguards arrived to complete the rescue. Tommy's heroism exemplifies a true commitment to the well-being of his community.

Courage to be Kind awards

Rick Lobos— we honor Rick Lobos with the Courage to be Kind award. Rick is a wonderful, kind, and patient entertainer who has generously donated hundreds of hours of his time to perform for seniors, veterans, and younger audiences. He captivates crowds with his singing and dancing, bringing everyone into the show with his engaging presence. His talent for performing as Frank Sinatra is legendary, with many even saying he's better than the original. Despite his busy schedule as a realtor, Rick consistently finds time to use his musical gifts to bring joy and kindness to countless people in our community.





Courage to be Kind awards

Richard Levitt —It is with great pleasure that we present a kindness award to Richard Levitt for his decades of unwavering dedication to helping low-income families in our community. Richard's commitment to ensuring no one goes hungry is truly inspiring, as he tirelessly picks up and delivers essential supplies to food banks, pantries, churches, and smaller organizations that feed the homeless and those in need. Recognizing that transportation can be a barrier, he also takes the initiative to set up accessible neighborhood locations. Furthermore, his thoughtful planning of holiday drop-offs ensures families can enjoy complete holiday meals with all the trimmings. His heartfelt efforts, which even include collaborating with Santa at Christmas, demonstrate a profound level of compassion and community spirit that makes him a most deserving recipient of this award.

Eugene "Diz" Isabella — It is a true honor to recognize Eugene "Diz" Isabella for his lifelong devotion and tireless contributions to the fire department and his beloved Seagraves community. From his early days as a firefighter, through his dedicated leadership as a captain and chief, Diz has exemplified what it means to serve with an open heart. His commitment endures long after retirement; he remains an active pillar of support, selflessly assisting at fundraisers, the annual pancake breakfasts on Memorial Day and Labor Day, and Christmas parties. His steadfast pride is evident to all, visible every single day in a different color fire department shirt he religiously wears. Your home, a cherished museum of fire service memorabilia and memories, reflects a life dedicated to service and community. Your unwavering devotion is profoundly appreciated and you are genuinely loved by all whose lives you have touched.

Rev. Mary Scifres— the internationally recognized speaker, teacher, and author, you lead with heart and purpose, inspiring others through your wisdom and compassion. You tirelessly support community organizations, generously sharing your talents—whether guiding teams toward their goals or joyfully stepping in to act, sing, or dance when needed. Through your kindness, creativity, and unwavering dedication, you uplifts everyone around you and remind us that true leadership shines brightest through service and love.





Courage to be Kind awards

David Nelson— For over 50 years, David Nelson has been a quiet force and the backbone of his community. Besides being one of the founding artists of Sawdust, he has dedicated his life to lifting others, serving as a steadfast safety net for countless sawdust artists and their families. Without seeking recognition or applause, he has earned a legacy not just through his craft, but by transforming clients into lifelong friends and strangers into family. He has been a constant, on-the-spot source of support, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to taking care of everyone around him.

Rev. BJ Beu — Rev. BJ Beu retired from The Neighborhood Community Church, has dedicated decades of service to the ministry with a deep passion for creative worship, preaching, and advocating for peace and justice. His inspiring sermons, contributions to the Abingdon Preaching Annual, and leadership in designing worship for his conference's annual gatherings reflect both his faith and artistry. Beyond the church, he gives selflessly to the wider community through his work on the City's HIV Advisory Committee, where he serves as a spiritual guide and speaker for World AIDS Day. Rev. Beu's kindness, compassion, and unwavering commitment to others continue to bless and uplift all who know him.

Cool to be Kind awards

Thank you all for your support to help us celebrate “2025 Day Of Kindness” event

Heartsy: Providing art table for young children at our event inspiring kindness

Rob Larson: Providing stage for our event including delivery and removal

Ed Steinfeld of “Voice of Laguna”: MC of the event, Providing Sound system, moderating “Conversation in Kindness”

Jennifer Halbert of “We Love Laguna Beach”: Sponsorship support, advertising, providing Kindness merch to raise awareness and help us fundraise

Laguna Beach Whole foods: Donating Kind Bars for donors & Pizza for Volunteers

Jadidiah Coffee: Donating Coffee for volunteers and donors

Pepsico: Donating soft drinks and water for volunteers and visitors

And the following musicians for the incredible musical performances

Lele Rose

Jason Feddy

Jon Bone

Yeggi & Steve

Laguna Beach Children's Choir

