# Irish Echo

# IRISH FIRST RESPONDER

## AWARDS 2026

## 12th Annual Gala Dinner and Awards Presentation

# Honoring The Bravest, Remembering The Fallen

By Ray O'Hanlon

When the Irish Echo first came up with the idea of honoring first responders it was, of course, prompted in part by the memories of 9/11.

Those jolting, peace-of-mind shattering, never fading memories.

For the New York City Fire Department in particular, that day in 2001 was both its greatest moment of tragedy, and its finest hour.

The FDNY's self-descriptive motto is "New York's Bravest."

On that day, the FDNY lived up to that title and, well, so much beyond it.

But the courage and selflessness displayed on 9/11, now a landmark twenty five years ago, was not confined to that one single day. We have witnessed it time and time again in the years since.

The bravery, the raw courage that the world witnessed on 9/11, is present in the ranks of the FDNY, and fire departments all over the country, on any given day.

So too is the iron-clad devotion to public service, a devotion reflected in those wearing emergency medical as well as firefighter uniforms.

In recent years we witnessed first responders in the form of healthcare workers taking to the front lines battling Covid-19.

First Responders, in this new and broader context, are essentially those who turn and face danger, and oft-times rush towards it. As a society, we would be lost without them.

Of course, Covid has had so many far reaching effects on our society that they have yet to be fully quantified.

But one particular effect for the Echo was the cancellation of the 2020 First Responder Awards, the planned seventh annual gathering.

That seventh gathering did take place a year later, on September 17, 2021 at Rosie O'Grady's in Manhattan, and so in the year marking the 20th anniversary of 9/11.

Gathering number eight took place at the same venue on Friday, October 28, 2022.

The 2023 gathering, the ninth, moved south. It took place at The View at The Battery, 1 Battery Place - so at the very southern tip of the island of Manhattan.

2024, again at the Battery venue, was a standout as it was the tenth awards gathering.

The 2025 awards event, the 11th annual, was held at a new venue, though one long familiar to Irish organizations in New York City and its surrounding areas: Antun's in Queens Village.

The gathering was again an opportunity for the Irish Echo, joined by our readers and advertisers, to pay tribute to the men and women who have, over the years, played such a vital role, not only in serving our communities, but in adding chapter after honorable chapter to the story of the Irish in America.

This year's 12th annual First Responders Awards have moved again - back into Manhattan - and will convene at Club 101 in the Kalikow Building on Park Avenue.

The First Responders Awards honor all who serve in the front line of Fire and EMS departments and hospitals around the nation. Award winners over the years have hailed from multiple states and are nominated by readers and the broader public.

Our past honorees have been firefighters and paramedics from as far afield as Nebraska, Missouri, Illinois and Arizona. So this is truly a national event.

The award nights are a celebration of the great tradition of families, and succeeding generations in families, stepping up as our nation's first responders.

The reception and dinner is an opportunity for fellow first responders to meet and greet, and for the honorees to be heartily lauded. It is also an opportunity to pause and consider certain things: tradition, family, courage and commitment.

And yes, every event is a time to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice on 9/11, and, in the years since, those who have died from 9/11-related illness, those who continue to battle such illness, and those family members who have been left behind to remember and honor.

So, in this 25th anniversary year of 9/11, we honor the legacy of those we have lost, even as we laud and award the living. It is, at its heart, a sacred task.

## 2026 IRISH FIRST RESPONDER ROLL OF HONOR

### The Windy City Guardian Award
**Thomas Haran**
Battalion Chief, Chicago Fire Department

### The Lifetime of Courage Award
**Brian Nee**
Firefighter/LT, Boston Fire Department

### The Frontline Valor Award
**John Collins**
Jersey City Firefighter; President, Uniformed Firefighters Association, IAFF Local 1066; Assistant County Counsel

### The EMT Emerald Excellence Award
**Juliette Bosco**
FDNY EMT, HazTac EMT

### The Champion of Labor Award
**Sean Micheal**
FDNY Battalion Chief, Battalion 16; Chiefs' Representative, UFOA

## 2026 AMBASSADORS

**Kristen Coletti**
Fourth-Year Medical Student, NYITCOM; Former Volunteer EMT and Lieutenant

**Maria Cullivan**
Registered Nurse, NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital

**Matthew Ellsworth**
FDNY Firefighter, Squad Company 18, Special Operations Command

**Ryan Gleeson**
Section Manager, Steam Operations Planning, Con Edison

**Noreen Guilfoyle**
Certified Nursing Assistant, Mather Hospital; Medical Student, NYITCOM

**Charlotte Iannone**
Qualified Firefighter, East Williston Volunteer Fire Department

**Brian Mahoney**
FDNY Lieutenant

**James McConville**
FDNY Lieutenant, Ladder 151

**Timothy McGuire**
FDNY Firefighter, Rescue Company 5

**Robert Meuser**
FDNY Deputy Chief, Division 3; Executive Officer, Safety Command

**Kevin Moore**
Section Manager, Manhattan Gas District Construction, Con Edison

**Edward P. Boles**
President

# CPS OPTICAL

**CPS has been a preferred vision provider for First Responders for over forty years and Congratulates all those being honored by the Irish Echo, especially my close colleagues & friends:**

***BC Sean Michael, LT Jimmy McConville, BC Bobby Meuser & FF Timmy McGuire.***

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# FIRST RESPONDERS AWARDS 2026

## Sean Michael



**Place of birth:** New York, NY.
**Job Description?** I am a Battalion Chief with the FDNY, assigned to Battalion 16 in Harlem, with nearly 31 years of service. I also serve as a Chiefs' Representative for the Uniformed Fire Officers Association (UFOA), representing active and retired FDNY fire officers.
**Why I chose this career?** I joined the FDNY because I wanted a career that made a difference, that gave me the opportunity to serve people and maybe make their lives better. Throughout my career, I have had the privilege of working alongside some of the finest firefighters and fire officers in the world. Many became role models and mentors who taught me the importance of leadership, sacrifice, and taking care of one another. Those lessons have guided me throughout my career, from responding to emergencies to leading firefighters and helping fellow members and their families.
**Proudest moment of my career?** It is difficult to single out just one moment. Becoming a firefighter and earning each promotion and assignment was incredible, largely because of the extraordinary firefighters and officers I had the privilege of learning from along the way. Being promoted to Battalion Chief and assigned to Battalion 16 in Harlem was a defining moment of my career.

Equally meaningful has been my work supporting fellow September 11th responders and their families. As a World Trade Center responder myself, I understand and have seen the lasting impact that day has had on so many lives. Helping members receive the medical care, benefits, and recognition they earned and deserve has become one of the most rewarding aspects of my life's work.
**Something people would be surprised to know about me...** Before joining the FDNY, I worked on Wall Street in the financial services industry, beginning my career at Dean Witter Reynolds before choosing a career with the FDNY. Surprisingly, that financial background has come full circle in my role as a Trustee of the New York City Fire Pension Fund, where I help protect the retirement security of fellow firefighters and fire officers.

Sean Michael is a 31-year veteran of the FDNY, assigned as a Battalion Chief in Battalion 16 in Harlem and serving as a Chiefs' Representative for the Uniformed Fire Officers Association (UFOA). As a September 11th World Trade Center responder, Sean has remained deeply involved in supporting those affected by the attacks and their aftermath. He serves on the Board for 9/11 Health Watch, Co-Chair of the World Trade Center Health Program Steering Committee, and Trustee of the New York City Fire Pension Fund. Sean lives on Long Island with his wife of 31 years, Karen. They are the proud parents of four children, Kathryn, Brian, Megan, and Shannon, daughter-in-law, Victoria, and grandparents to Robert. He considers his family and the lifelong friendships developed throughout his FDNY career to be among his greatest blessings.

## Timothy McGuire

**Place of birth:** Brooklyn, NY.
**Job Description?** 20-year veteran of the New York City fire department currently assigned to rescue company 5 which covers all of Staten Island and south Brooklyn.
**Why I chose this career?** There has never been anything else I've wanted to do then be a member of the FDNY. This department has taught me how to be a man, a husband, a father and how to appreciate how hard work pays off.
**Proudest moment of my career?** The proudest moment of my career was raising my right hand and taking the oath to be a member of the FDNY. That day I had no idea where me career would take me but I couldn't be happier of where I am. The members and officers I have worked with have taught me how to carry myself in the traditions of the FDNY.
**Something people would be surprised to know about me...** If I wasn't a firefighter I'd want to be a teacher.

Timothy McGuire is a 20-year FDNY veteran assigned to Rescue 5, previously serving with Rescue 1, Ladder 157, and Ladder 119. A proud member of the FDNY Pipes and Drums and Emerald Society, he was born in Brooklyn, raised on Staten Island, and spent summers in Breezy Point. He attended St. Peter's Boys High School and Iona University. Timothy shares his life with wife Lisa and daughter Riley. His family includes parents John and Connie, sister Catherine, brother-in-law Nate Goodwin, niece Avery, and nephew Ben. He proudly honors his McGuire roots in County Fermanagh and Gildea roots in County Donegal.





## Ryan Gleeson

**Place of birth:** Middletown, NY.
**Job Description?** I am currently the Section Manager of Steam Operations Planning for Con Edison. My job entails maintaining the day-to-day business operation, developing new initiatives to streamline our business and provide reliable and affordable steam to our steam customers.
**Why I chose this career?** I chose this career because I have always wanted to be a leader who could lead from experience with hands on experience. Having the opportunity to start my career in merchant shipping and as a power plant operator, I have been able to lead by example and develop teams with firsthand experience, while understanding the challenges that my employees face.
**Proudest moment of my career?** The proudest moment of my career was when I received the title of Section Manager of Steam Operations Planning. After many years of devotion to my trade, I achieved a position that has allowed me to bring my strength and experience across the entire organization. It has been rewarding to lead organizational level initiatives to success over the past 3.5 years.
**Something people would be surprised to know about me...** I own a 1999 Pontiac Firebird that my father bought original, that I bought from him in 2006 as my first car. I have driven this car all over the country and still have managed to keep it after 3 kids. My children now have great memories of driving with the T-tops off to car shows, sports and around town.

As a young man, I aspired to become a lineworker with Orange & Rockland, but my father encouraged me to attend college first. I chose SUNY Maritime, where I built a strong foundation in discipline, time management, leadership, and practical hands-on experience. That education opened doors to meaningful opportunities in the merchant shipping industry and, ultimately, with Con Edison. Along the way, I lived in three different states, gained valuable perspective, met my wife from Queens, and eventually settled in Rockland County. Today, I am proud to have built both a fulfilling career and a family of three.

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# FIRST RESPONDERS AWARDS 2026

## Juliette Bosco

**Place of birth:** Connecticut.
**Job Description?** I am an EMT with the FDNY where I am stationed in Harlem, NYC. I respond in an ambulance to 911 calls including traumatic injuries, and medical emergencies where I provide patient care to those with life threatening injuries and illnesses in the prehospital setting.
**Why I chose this career?** I chose this career because I developed a passion for emergency medicine through caring for my aunt who was a second mother to me during her last few months with us. My aunt Lianne supported me through my professional ballet career and never left my side in my 20 years with her. In August of 2022, the number 911 became very familiar to me and I was inspired by the EMTs and paramedics who cared for her as if she were their own family member. They provided a feeling of safety that I will never forget and through this I grew a natural understanding for medicine specifically in a setting where decisions need to be made under pressure which is something I excel in and find comfort in. I aim to provide that same feeling of safety when I am in the presence of those that called 911 on their worst day.
**Proudest moment of my career?** The proudest moments of my career would be graduating from my EMS academy class as the Valedictorian as well as being selected to become a HazTac EMT. I devoted myself to this job and earning the recognition for my drive and work ethic meant everything to me. Being given an opportunity to further my career and myself as an EMT with a specialty, being a HazTac EMT provided me with a larger scope of practice where I could perform patient care in a hazardous materials environment and treat exposures and contaminations alongside the most elite of the entire department.
**Something people would be surprised to know about me...** People would be surprised to know that I was a professional ballerina from age 12-16 and travelled all over the world to perform and competed in many prominent ballet competitions where I was awarded scholarships as well as gold medals as the youngest competitor in my category. I also have a passion for astrophysics and quantum physics. I am currently developing some theories of my own that have to do with how physics truly works in our universe on the quantum scales in the most astronomical ways. I plan on earning a PhD. in astrophysics and or theoretical physics so that I can perform experiments to hopefully prove my theories.

Juliette Bosco, 24, embodies the proud Irish-American legacy within the FDNY, tracing her heritage to Cork. A former professional ballerina who toured globally from age 12, Juliette transitioned to emergency services, earning distinction as an elite HazTac EMT within the Special Operations Battalion. Balancing her rigorous frontline duties in New York City, she is currently pursuing advanced studies in astrophysics and quantum physics with the goal of earning a PhD to pioneer breakthroughs in universal mechanics. Juliette represents the finest traditions of dedication, courage, and intellectual ambition in the Irish-American first responder community.





## John Collins

**Place of birth:** Jersey City, NJ.
**Job Description?** I am a firefighter for the City of Jersey City, President of The Uniformed Firefighters Association of Jersey City IAFF Local 1066 and Assistant County Counsel for Hudson County NJ.
**Why I chose this career?** I chose to be a firefighter in Jersey City so I could serve my community and the city I love. I wanted to follow in my mother (nurse), grandmother (nurse) and grandfathers' (police officers) footsteps as a first responder in Jersey City.
**Proudest moment of my career?** The day I was sworn in. To know that I would be serving my community and making my family proud.
**Something people would be surprised to know about me...** I cannot drive a manual transmission - it is embarrassing lol.

I was born and raised in Jersey City, the product of a strong Irish mother and grandmother who taught my brother and I about working hard and keeping your word. I proudly trace my roots to Counties Kerry and Cork. I attended law school and became an attorney because they valued education and working hard. I became a firefighter because they also taught us about the importance of service and community. I am proud to be the President of the Jersey City Uniformed Firefighters' Association and the work we do on behalf of our brave men and women.



## Thomas Haran

**Place of birth:** Oak Lawn, IL.
**Job Description?** Battalion Chief for the Chicago Fire Department.
**Why I chose this career?** I chose to become a firefighter because it allows me to provide a public service, but also because it's an exciting and adventurous job which gives one the opportunity to see things that most people never get to see. For me, it's the best job in the world.
**Proudest moment of my career?** I worked in some very busy areas, and I'm proud of the fires we put out, the fact that we helped people out of buildings or car wrecks and all the emergency service work. But I'm most proud that in my career I helped other firefighters to improve their skills and knowledge base and get promoted.

Battalion Chief Thomas Haran of the Chicago Fire Department just completed his thirtieth year of service. He is the sixth of thirteen children born to his parents, Irish immigrants from County Mayo. After studying to be a teacher, he took an opportunity to join the fire service. He spent his first 11 years as a firefighter on both engines and trucks before becoming a fire engineer. Later he became a Lieutenant of Engine 126 and then a Captain of Truck 20, working some of the busiest areas of the city. He is most proud of his wife and two children.

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Congratulates the recipients of the
2026 IRISH ECHO FIRST
RESPONDER AWARDS
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General Secretary-Treasurer

# FIRST RESPONDERS AWARDS 2026



## James McConville

**Place of birth:** Bronx, NY.
**Job Description?** Lieutenant Ladder 151 Pride of the Hills.
Why I chose this career? My decision to join the fire service was influenced by my uncle FDNY Battalion Chief Fred Scheffold. Going to the fire house as a kid really stuck with me.
**Proudest moment of my career?** This is truly hard to define but being promoted to Lieutenant. It was something that required self motivation as well as hard work. Being tasked with leading some of the greatest people on this department inspires me to be better every day.
**Something people would be surprised to know about me...** I am a Licensed New York State Funeral Director.

Born in New York City, I grew up in the Throggs Neck section of the Bronx attending NYC Public Schools, Cardinal Spellman High School and The American Academy McAllister Institute of Funeral Services . I entered the FDNY Fire Academy in 2006, I was assigned to Engine Company 66 in the Bronx, transferred to Engine 63 then Ladder 39. I was promoted to Lt. in 2022 where I was worked in Engine 305 before Ladder 151 in Forest Hills, Queens. I currently still reside in the Throggs Neck section of the Bronx with my wife Annie, and two children, James and Caroline.

## Maria Cullivan



**Place of birth:** Queens, NY.
**Job Description?** I currently serve as a nurse in the Outpatient Endoscopy Unit at New York Presbyterian Hospital, but have experience across my eight years as a nurse in orthopedic surgery, ambulatory surgery, and neuroscience critical care specialties.
**Why I chose this career?** I come from a large Irish family with nurses on both my maternal and paternal sides. Both of my parents have pursued careers in healthcare. My mother is a registered nurse and a science teacher. I confess that, when I first entered college, nursing was not on my radar. However, my mother recognized the distinctive qualities of care, compassion, and competence in me and suggested it. What they say is true, mothers know best.
**Proudest moment of my career?** My first job, after passing my nursing boards, was on New York Presbyterian's Neuroscience Step Down Unit, where patients suffering traumatic brain injuries that require around-the-clock specialized critical care. Over the course of a year, I changed from a wide-eyed twenty-something who had hoped the reality of medicine would resemble her favorite sitcom Scrubs to a confident and competent nurse who succeeded in one of the hospital's most demanding units. Like most people in my profession who experienced the global pandemic, I cannot say that even my time in Neuro prepared me for what came through the doors. When I saw my first wave of Covid-19 patients, placed on ventilators, and with most treatment options exhausted. Family members along with the hospital staff hoped for miracles in the face of uncertainty. Thinking back, what I am proudest of in my career has been working with my colleagues and the community through such stressful times to provide the best care possible.
**Something people would be surprised to know about me...** I am a huge supporter of Manchester United!

Maria Cullivan, born and raised in Queens, NY, comes come from a large Irish family based in both Queens and County Cavan, her father is from County Cavan. Maria has been a Registered Nurse for 8 years and graduated from St. Francis College in Brooklyn Heights with her Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Maria is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Nursing at CUNY Hunter College in the Clinical Nurse Specialist program, with an expected Graduation date of December 2026.

## Kevin Moore

**Place of birth:** Flushing NY.
**Job Description?** I currently serve as the Section Manager of Manhattan Gas District Construction for Consolidated Edison, where I lead a team of construction and emergency response professionals responsible for maintaining the safety and reliability of the natural gas system in Manhattan. In this role, I manage crews that operate around the clock, responding to a wide range of emergencies, including natural gas pipeline leaks, excavation-related damages, carbon monoxide incidents, and building fires.

A key aspect of my position is providing leadership during emergency situations. I frequently respond to significant incidents and serve as the Incident Commander, coordinating response efforts, establishing operational objectives, ensuring the safety of employees and the public, and working closely with fire departments, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders. My team and I are committed to restoring safe conditions as quickly and effectively as possible while maintaining the highest standards of operational excellence and public safety.
In addition to my responsibilities at Con Edison, I proudly serve as a member of the North Bellmore Fire Department, where I continue a longstanding commitment to public service and emergency response. I currently serve as a Firefighter, Company Engineer and a member of the department's Technical Rescue Team.
**Why I chose this career?** My inspiration to pursue a career in the natural gas industry began with my father, who worked for Consolidated Edison. Growing up, I saw the pride and fulfillment he derived from helping maintain and operate critical infrastructure in the largest city in the country. I also witnessed the strong sense of camaraderie and purpose he shared with his coworkers. As I prepared to enter the workforce, I knew I wanted more than just a job; I wanted a career that would allow me to make a meaningful contribution while providing for my future family.

Con Edison offered exactly that opportunity. As my career progressed, I continued searching for ways to make an even greater impact, which ultimately led me to the emergency response side of our business. That path allowed me to combine my technical knowledge of the gas system with my passion for helping others. Working in emergency response has given me the opportunity to interact directly with the public, support first responders, and assist communities during some of their most challenging moments. Being able to leverage my experience and expertise to protect public safety, support emergency operations, and help maintain the reliability of critical infrastructure has provided a deep sense of purpose throughout my career.



**Proudest moment of my career?** When I accepted a role within Con Edison's Gas Emergency Response Group (ERG). This position was especially meaningful to me because it combined my passion for utility operations with my commitment to emergency response. ERG personnel are responsible for responding to incidents across the gas system, assisting with mitigation efforts, establishing Incident Command System (ICS) structures, providing subject matter expertise, and serving as liaisons between the company and external agencies on scene. We are also responsible for delivering training to fire departments, law enforcement agencies, and other emergency responders to help them safely and effectively manage incidents involving utility hazards.

Serving in this role allowed me to bring together two worlds that I care deeply about: the utility industry and the fire service. Having the opportunity to positively impact the safety of first responders and the public through training, coordination, and emergency response has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. Knowing that my efforts have helped improve preparedness, strengthen partnerships, and contribute to safer outcomes for both responders and the communities they serve remains a significant source of pride.

I was born and raised in Flushing, New York, and earned both my Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Organizational Leadership from Manhattan University. I am married to my wife, Marjorie, and together we are raising our two daughters, Sarah and Keira, in Merrick, New York. Guided by the values of family, leadership, and lifelong learning, I am committed to personal growth, community engagement, and making a positive impact in the lives of others.

The NJ FMBA congratulates
Jack Collins
and all the 2026 Irish Echo
First Responder Award Recipients

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*Congratulations to*

**Lieutenant Brian Nee**

Boston Fire Department EAP!

Thank you for your
years of support for individuals
and families in our communities!

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"The Restoration of Dignity"

- Peter Barbuto and all Gavin Foundation Staff

# FIRST RESPONDERS AWARDS 2026

## Brian Nee

**Place of Birth:** Boston.
**Job Description:** Firefighter/Lieutenant.
Why I chose this career? I chose this career for two reasons. First, my father was a firefighter, and I have many family members who are first responders. Growing up, I saw how much they enjoyed going to work and helping people. The main reason, though, was the Boston Fire Department's Employee Assistance Program, one of the first firefighter employee assistance programs in the world, which started in 1984. My father was a Boston firefighter, and from the ages of 17 to 22, I struggled with addiction to opiates and alcohol. That program helped family members as well, and it helped me get into treatment. I have been in recovery ever since. They literally saved my life, and that experience became another reason why I wanted to become a firefighter.
**Proudest Moment of My Career:** The proudest moment of my career was becoming the person in charge of the Boston Fire Employee Assistance Program three years ago. It was a full-circle moment for me. This program saved my life, and now I am able to help other firefighters and their family members with mental health, addiction, and many other challenges.
**Something people might be surprised to know about me..** is that I ran the Boston Marathon. I have also been in recovery for 28 years, which is something I am very proud of.

Brian Nee is a Boston Fire Department lieutenant and counselor assigned to the Employee Assistance Program. A Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor and Certified Employee Assistance Professional, he has supported firefighters and families facing behavioral health and addiction challenges for 20 years. Brian serves on several community boards and co-founded the Joseph "Dodo" Nee Foundation, which has given more than $400,000 back to the community. He has been in recovery for 28 years and lives in Dorchester with his wife, Kerry, and their two sons.
Brian is a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor and Certified Employee Assistance Professional. He received his BA from UMass Boston. He is a trainer with the IAFF Peer Support Program and has assisted his peers in the aftermath of the Orlando nightclub shooting, the Lewiston, Maine, tragedy, Hurricane Harvey in Houston, and the Boston Marathon.

Brian travels around the country teaching other firefighters about behavioral health issues. Brian has been in recovery for 28 years and has helped people get into treatment and recovery for many years. He has also helped firefighters and their family members with behavioral health issues for 20 years.

Brian currently resides in Dorchester with his wife, Kerry, and their sons, Connor and Aidan.



## Noreen Guilfoyle

**Place of birth:** Port Jefferson, New York.
**Job Description?** Night shift float certified nursing assistant at Mather Hospital and 2nd year medical student and teacher's assistant at NYITCOM.
- Provide direct patient care over multiple inpatient hospital units overnight while balancing the academic and clinical training demands of a second-year medical student.
- Assist nurses and interdisciplinary healthcare teams in providing safe, compassionate, and efficient patient care in a fast-paced hospital environment.
- Assist patients with activities of daily living including toileting, bathing, dressing, feeding and ambulation.
- Obtain and document vital signs, monitor patient comfort and promptly report changes in patient condition to nursing staff.
- Float between assigned hospital units based on staffing needs, adapting to diverse patient populations and unit-specific workflows.
- Provide observation and emotional support for patients requiring additional monitoring, including patients with behavioral health needs.
- Support patient safety through fall prevention, infection control, safe patient transfers, and maintenance of a clean patient environment.
- Serve as a member of the code team, providing chest compressions during cardiopulmonary resuscitation efforts.
**Why I chose this career?** I spent my gap year between grad school and medical school as a CNA to learn more about how a hospital functions and to gain direct patient care experience. I stayed on during medical school because I love being able to help patients feel more comfortable and cared for during one of the worst times in their lives. What started as an opportunity to learn has become a lifelong calling. Each patient I care for inspires me to be a caring, patient, and compassionate future physician. While it is great to see the concepts I learn in school applied in the real world, it is so much more rewarding to have real human interactions with my patients and get to know them as people.
**Proudest moment of my career?** Being a CNA can be a difficult job. I empty bedpans, fetch warm blankets, brush teeth, and feed patients. It may not be the most glamorous or cerebral of jobs in the hospital, but it makes a difference in my patients lives. While I can't choose one particular moment over the course of my career that I am proudest of, I can say that every patient I care for on my shift is a person whose life I can make a difference in. The comforts of home are the first things noticed when we have to spend a night without them. While I can't provide exactly what a patient has at home, I can try my best to make them as comfortable as possible. Nothing is quite like being able to turn a frustrated, uncomfortable patient into a smiling and laughing person, even if only for a few minutes.
**Something people would be surprised to know about me...** I've run 6 full marathons in the last 4 years with plans to run a 7th in April of 2027. Ultimately, I'd like to run a full marathon in every state and all of the World Major Marathons. So far I've done the:
Mohawk Hudson River Marathon - Albany, NY
Suffolk County Marathon - Babylon, NY
Boston Marathon - Boston, MA
Hartford Marathon - Hartford, CT
Newport Marathon - Newport, RI
Chicago Marathon - Chicago, IL.

Noreen Guilfoyle is a current OMSII and OMM TA at NYITCOM, and a night shift CNA at Mather Hospital. She graduated from the University at Albany summa cum laude in 2022 with a Bachelor of Science double majoring in Public Health and Interdisciplinary Studies in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology; and 2024 with a Master of Public Health concentrating in Biomedical Science. She is the youngest of four siblings and a proud aunt to seven nephews and one niece. She enjoys spending time outside and collecting beach glass. She is a fourth generation Irish American and is currently learning Irish Gaelic.



## Charlotte Iannone

**Place of birth:** New Hyde Park, NY.
**Job Description?** I am a Qualified Firefighter in the East Williston Volunteer Fire Department. I joined when I turned 17 in 2021, and completed my training in the following years. Currently, I am training to become an EMT for my department.
**Why I chose this career?** When we moved to East Williston, my dad became a volunteer firefighter, and I was very excited to follow in his footsteps and join when I turned 17.
**Proudest moment of my career?** The first time that I went on air and entered a fire building, or when I received a distinction for completing five years in the service.

Charlotte is a graduate of Bowdoin College, where she was an English and History major and Captain of the Women's Soccer Team. Outside of her first responder service in East Williston, she researched and wrote a historical fiction novel about East Williston's historical families.



# slánte

## JACK COLLINS

Firefighter, Jersey City Fire Department

Leader IAFF 1066

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May the road you have walked in service to
others be remembered with gratitude.

May the lives you have saved and the hearts
you have comforted be your lasting reward.

May the courage and kindness you have
shown return to you a hundredfold,
and may you always find a safe journey home.

-with love, your proud family

# FIRST RESPONDERS AWARDS 2026



## Matthew Ellsworth

**Place of birth:** Suffern, NY.
**Job Description?** Firefighter for the FDNY, Assigned to Squad Company 18 in Special Operations Command.
**Why I chose this career?** Both of my parents had careers in civil service. My mother was a nurse in labor & delivery and my father was a Sheriff's Deputy. They instilled and taught me the value & desire to serve others. The FDNY embraces that core value of putting the well being & safety of the public above all else. There is no other career I would rather have- this is the best Job on Earth.
**Proudest moment of my career?** There have been many amazing moments and it is impossible to choose just one. A standout memory would be playing for the FDNY Bravest Football team in our 2023 season. We went undefeated and won the NPSFL National Championship game against the NYPD Finest Football team. The dedication, comaraderie and pride to represent the FDNY on the field was an experience I will always be grateful for.
**Something people would be surprised to know about me:** I have a degree in Bachelor of Science.

Matthew was born in 1983 in Suffern, NY. Hired by NYPD Officer 1/9/06. Hired by FDNY 11/19/06, assigned to Engine Co. 44. Married Elizabeth in 2012, Son Everett born 2016, Son Landon born 2018. Transferred to Squad Co. 18 in March 2020.



## Brian Mahoney

**Place of birth:** Franklin Square, NY.
**Job Description?** FDNY Lieutenant.
**Why I chose this career?** I chose this career for the opportunity to enjoy what I do every shift I work. This job never has a dull moment, and every day brings on a new challenge and a new opportunity to learn.
**Proudest moment of my career?** The proudest moment of my career was receiving a unit citation along with the members of Engine 73 and Ladder 42 for the work we did at a building fire resulting in two lives saved. It was very rewarding to see the hard work we do while training pay off.
**Something people would be surprised to know about me...** For most people at this event, it won't be much of a surprise, but I am a die-hard Notre Dame Fighting Irish fan.

Brian was born and raised in Franklin Square, New York and currently resides in Rockville Centre, New York. He has been with the FDNY for 8 years and was recently promoted in July 2026. Brian lives with his wife, Lisa and two sons Jack (5) and Matty (1).

## Kristen Coletti

**Place of birth:** Huntington, NY
**Job Description:** I am a 4th year medical student at New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine (NYITCOM) and have just submitted my application to Emergency Medicine Residency. Prior to my admission to medical school, I served as a volunteer EMT and Lieutenant at Binghamton University's collegiate ambulance-Harpur's Ferry as well as Dix Hills Fire Department. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, I completed tours as an EMT in temporary COVID isolation housing for vulnerable New Yorkers.
**Why I chose this career?** I've always been someone who steps forward rather than steps back when faced with a challenge. Growing up, I looked up to my mother, who was a Sergeant in the NYPD and a 9/11 first responder and survivor. I admired her braveness, quick thinking, courage, and unwavering commitment to helping others, even in the face of uncertainty. As I grew older, I began to recognize those same values in myself. Serving as an EMT and ambulance crew leader allowed me to combine my natural inclination toward leadership with my love for science, problem-solving, and human connection. I found purpose in the unpredictability of emergency care, where remaining composed amid chaos and making difficult decisions can have a profound impact. Pursuing emergency medicine felt like a natural extension of both the example my mother set and the person I have become.
**Proudest moment of my career?** The proudest moment of my career has been my acceptance to medical school. The countless hours I have spent on rigs, learning from my patients, and hearing their stories has not left me, and continues to motivate me throughout my studies and training.

I am a third-generation Irish-American woman and fourth-year medical student at the New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine, pursuing a career in Emergency Medicine. My passion for serving others began as a volunteer EMT and Lieutenant with Binghamton University's Harpur's Ferry Ambulance and as an EMT with the Dix Hills Fire Department. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I provided frontline care in temporary isolation housing for vulnerable New Yorkers. These experiences strengthened my commitment to public service, compassion, and leadership. I am proud to carry forward the values of service and community rooted in my Irish-American heritage.



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# FIRST RESPONDERS AWARDS 2026




## Robert Meuser

**Place of Birth:** Stewart Manor, NY
**Job Description:** I serve as a Deputy Chief in the FDNY assigned to Division 3 in Manhattan. Currently I am also the Executive Officer for the Safety Command, which oversees safety for both our Fire & EMS members.
**Why I chose this career?** I was surrounded by a family of civil servants when I was young. Service ran in the family, and it was something that stood out when I thought about careers. As I got older, I saw how happy and fulfilled our friends and neighbors were in the FDNY, so the job just stood out to me.
**Proudest Moment of My Career:** Being appointed to the FDNY. That was everything I had hoped and worked for since I was very young.
**How do you celebrate your Irishness?** I've been told my social side is a reflection of my Muldoon family lineage.
**Something people might be surprised to know about me:** I love coaching. Coaching my kids' teams and recently being able to help bring Rugby to my alma mater Chaminade High School in 2023 as an assistant coach. Giving back to the game that gave so much to me is a blessing.

Robert, a Stewart Manor, N.Y., native, is a 20-year FDNY veteran. He started at Manhattan's Ladder 16, served as lieutenant with Engine 94 and Ladder 48 in the South Bronx, covered as captain in Queens' Division 14, and became battalion chief of Battalion 8 in Midtown Manhattan. He currently serves as Executive Officer of Safety Command and a covering deputy in Division 3. A University of Scranton and Chaminade High School graduate, Robert serves as assistant rugby coach at Chaminade. He lives in East Northport, N.Y., with his wife of 15 years, Laura, and children Logan, 12, and Brynn, 9.

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The Grand Council comprises twenty-seven (27) affiliated Emerald Societies representing essential frontline professions across Arizona, California, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Washington, D.C., with one affiliated organization operating nationwide.

# The Eleventh Annual First Responder Awards

The eleventh annual Irish Echo First Responders Awards were presented at a dinner gathering in Antun's of Queens Village on Friday, November 14. The evening also included a presentation to the Echo's Irish American of the Year Siobhan Dennehy. Photos by Nuala Purcell.



The Irish Echo's Irish Person of the Year, Siobhan Dennehy receives her award from Irish Echo Editor Ray O'Hanlon



Honoree John Doolan and Ruth Guthrie.



Guests enjoying the evening.



New York's Bravest recipient Will Sullivan with his wife Alison.



Honoree Michael Tracey with his family.



Honoree Michael Tracey with his wife Caitlin and daughters Sadie & Georgia.



Honoree Christopher Magas with his family.



Honoree David Morkal with guests.



Honoree John Doolan receives his award from Deputy Consul General Roisin Leonard.



Honoree Christopher Magas with his family.



Deputy Consul General of Ireland in NY Roisin Leonard presents Conor Farrell with his award.



Dan and Siobhan Dennehy with Ray O'Hanlon.

# FIRST RESPONDERS AWARDS 2026



Guests having a grand night.



Brendan Meaney of the Yonkers OEM receives his award from Deputy Consul General Roisin Leonard.



Yonkers Firefighter Shane McIntyre with Deputy Consul General Roisin Leonard.



Honoree Kenneth Kinsman receives his award from Deputy Consul General Roisin Leonard.



Honoree Shane McIntyre with friends from Yonkers IAFF



FDNY First Deputy Commissioner Mark Guerra presents Chris Magas with his award.



Honoree Sean Edwards receives his award from FDNY First Deputy Commissioner Mark Guerra.



Honoree David Morkal accepting his award from FDNY First Deputy Commissioner Mark Guerra.




FDNY Retired Battalion Chief David Morkal acceptance speech.



FDNY Captain Michael Tracey & FDNY First Deputy Commissioner Mark Guerra.



FDNY Firefighter Will Sullivan & FDNY First Deputy Commissioner Mark Guerra.




Irish Echo's Ray O'Hanlon along with FDNY First Deputy Commissioner Mark Guerra.



# CONGRATULATIONS

# Juliette Bosco

## And all the 2026 First Responder Award Winners.





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