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**The California
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Stars of Life!



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STARS OF LIFE

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Justin Bowen
Paramedic
Medic Ambulance
Service

Justin Bowen started working for Medic Ambulance in October 2023. When asked how he decided to get into the EMS field, he says, "My mom was a registered nurse for many years and this inspired me to want to help people. When I was in my early twenties, she suggested I check out the EMS program at our local junior college, which I did, and during my first responder and EMT class I found myself hooked! I enjoyed the excitement, the camaraderie, and the attention to detail. In 1998 I decided EMS was where I wanted to be and it was time for a new challenge, so I enrolled in the paramedic academy. EMS has been a fulfilling career and as I've aged, I've grown to enjoy it even more." When asked what he likes about working for Medic Ambulance, he explains, "First, I enjoy the family atmosphere. In EMS we see and do things that are, at times, emotionally taxing, funny, gross, etc. Sharing these experiences together forges relationships like no other and as a result my peers feel like family. Medic pays attention to detail in a way that corporations don't seem to do and I appreciate that. Additionally, at Medic I have a good work/life balance as a result of scheduling and adequate paid time off." In his free time, Justin enjoys autocross sports car racing, spending time with his girlfriend and his daughter and relaxing with their two dogs and three cats. Justin is being recognized at Medic Ambulance Sonoma Division's 2024 Paramedic of the Year. ★



Karin Dowling
EMT
Medic Ambulance
Service

Karin Dowling has been with Medic Ambulance since October 2023, but an EMT since 1986. She is being recognized as Medic Ambulance's EMT of the Year for Sonoma County Fire District-EMS Operations. Karin is an outstanding Field Training Officer, provides high quality service and participated in a recent cardiac arrest field save. When asked how she knew EMS was the right career for her, she says, "My brother was a paramedic and talked me into applying for a dispatch position. From there, the company I worked for decided that they wanted their dispatchers to be EMTs so they sent me to school. After graduating, I rode with several crews and decided to go work on an ambulance and never looked back. I enjoy working on the ambulance and find it very rewarding." She enjoys the people at Medic Ambulance and enjoys talking to the field crews. In her spare time, she likes playing soccer and traveling with her girls. Karin has been a mentor to many and impacted so many lives during her career in Sonoma County. ★



Andrew Natoli
Paramedic
Medic Ambulance
Service

Andrew Natoli started working for Medic Ambulance in October 2023. He knew he wanted to work in the healthcare field when he was a senior in high school. Andrew explains, "My senior year of high school I took an elective anatomy class that piqued my interest and appreciation for the intricacies of human anatomy. My teacher spurred this on with class dissection, trips to the cadaver lab, and numerous career guest speakers including a local paramedic who talked about the profession and taught the basics of intubation on mannequins. I ended up taking EMR before I graduated high school and fell in love with the profession. I became an EMT and loved working 911 but attending the Paramedic Academy solidified my appreciation of the field I get to work in. Being able to help people, providing physical and emotional care, in the community I grew up in has been incredibly rewarding and fulfilling." Andrew is being presented with the Star of Life Award for his role in multiple cardiac arrest field saves in Sonoma County, his excellent work as a Field Training Officer and providing high quality service to his patients. Andrew has been a part of several critical incidents in Sonoma County and has always led with his amazing clinical care, communication skills, and teaching skills. Andrew is truly a leader in EMS care in Sonoma County and continues to set the standard of care. ★



Scott Penning
EMT/FTO
LIFewest

Scott Penning consistently exhibits the qualities that define excellence in Emergency Medical Services through his outstanding service as an EMT and Field Training Officer at LIFewest. Over his four-year tenure, Scott has demonstrated exceptional versatility and commitment, serving across BLS, ALS, and Critical Care Transport resources while maintaining the highest standards of patient care and customer service. As a Field Training Officer, Scott has earned the respect and admiration of his peers through his unwavering work ethic and consistently positive attitude. His colleagues particularly note his willingness to step up in any situation, making him an invaluable team member during both routine operations and challenging circumstances. Scott's adaptability and expertise across multiple service levels have made him an essential part of LIFewest's operations. His commitment to supporting his fellow EMTs, Paramedics, and CCT-RNs combined with his dedication to patient care, embodies the collaborative spirit that drives emergency medical services forward. His nomination for the 2025 Star of Life Award by his peers reflects the profound impact he has made within the organization and his role in fostering a positive workplace culture that benefits both staff and patients alike. ★



Charlene Souza
EMT
Medic Ambulance
Service

Charlene Souza has been with Medic Ambulance since November 2023. She originally started working in EMS because she understands how important it is to provide service to others. Charlene explains, "Being the first person on scene when someone is having an emergency, I can set the tone for their care and provide crucial treatment in times of need. Working on an ambulance allows me to help others in a diverse number of ways such as physical, emotional, and mental support." She believes that Medic Ambulance is driven to provide the best care possible and appreciates the closeness of her co-workers. Charlene is currently in school to become a paramedic and would love to continue teaching new EMTs once she's finished. In her free time, she likes to stay active by surfing and participating in other exercise activities. Charlene is being recognized as a Star of Life for her in providing immediate and live saving care while off duty during a cardiac arrest field save at the 24-Hour Fitness in Rohnert Park. Charlene witnessed the arrested and immediately provided care. Rohnert Park Fire, who was also working out at the gym, worked with Charlene to provide CPR, apply the AED and provided multiple shocks before the local Sonoma County Fire District-EMS ambulance arrived. The patient was transported to a local STEMI Center for further care. The patient was discharged and has a good neurological outcome. ★



Abraham Stewart
Directing Manager
LIFEwest

Abraham Stewart exemplifies the dedication and leadership that defines excellence in Emergency Medical Services. With a remarkable 25-year career that began as an EMT and progressed through paramedic service, Mr. Stewart has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to delivery of patient care and emergency medical operations in Northern California. As the Directing Manager of LIFEwest Ambulance, Mr. Stewart has been instrumental in building the organization from its foundation into a premier provider. His extensive experience, including roles as Operations Manager, Director of Operations and Communications Center Director for several leading organizations, provided him with the comprehensive understanding needed to guide LIFEwest through its critical growth phases. Under Mr. Stewart's leadership, LIFEwest not only survived but thrived during the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. While many organizations faced downsizing and closure, he maintained operational stability and preserved the company's positive culture, ensuring continuous high-quality patient care and employee retention during this crucial period. Abraham Stewart's nomination for the 2025 Star of Life Award recognizes not only his personal achievements but also his lasting impact on emergency medical services in Northern California. His leadership at LIFEwest demonstrates how dedication, hard work and critical thinking can transform an organization while maintaining an unwavering focus on service excellence and employee development. ★



Kayla Vance
EMT
*Medic Ambulance
Service*

Kayla Vance started working at Medic Ambulance in November 2023. She knew from a young age that she wanted to help people. The hardships Kayla had endured during her childhood made the decision to work in EMS very clear. Kayla has always believed that if she could make a difference in at least one person's life then it's all worth it. Kayla likes the diverse opportunities, including standby events and volunteer work, that Medic Ambulance has to offer. She also appreciates that Medic does first responder spotlights to acknowledge paramedics and EMTs on a personal level. This helps the community get to know each responder on a more personal level. When Kayla is not working, she likes to give back to the EMT program that she attended by mentoring the new students and helping them through the course. Kayla also enjoys softball and helps at Santa Rosa Junior College when she can with coaching. Kayla started the coed slow pitch softball team at Medic Ambulance in Sonoma County to give employees an outlet and connect outside the workplace. Kayla plans to apply to the paramedic program to move her emergency medicine career forward. Kayla is being recognized as a Star of Life for her role in providing care to a cardiac arrest field save at the 24-Hour Fitness in Rohnert Park. The patient was discharged and has a good neurological outcome. ★



Luke Bello
EMT
*Medic Ambulance
Service*

Luke Bello has been with Medic Ambulance since September 2023. He originally got into EMS because he knew he wanted to help people and that he didn't want to do it from behind a desk. Being in EMS allows him to make a direct impact in peoples' lives. He likes working in Sonoma because it's a community that he cares about. He finds that being able to serve the Sonoma community and knowing that he can make a difference in someone's worst moment is incredibly rewarding. When he's not working, Luke likes to snowboard, spend time with friends and watch sports. He plans to get his paramedic license and pursue flight medicine or work for the fire department. Luke is being recognized as a Star of Life for he and his partners lifesaving care of a Cardiac Arrest patient which led to a Field Save with positive cognitive outcome. ★



Timothy Vietmeier
CCT/RN
LIFEwest

Tim Vietmeier, CCT-RN, embodies excellence in Critical Care Transport through his extraordinary 37-year career in emergency medical services. With both a BSN from Radford University and an MSN from Touro University, Tim has demonstrated exceptional skill in managing complex critical care transports, including patients requiring intra-aortic balloon pumps and multiple vasopressors. His diverse background spans roles from EMT to Nationally Registered Paramedic, complemented by extensive experience in surgical trauma, cardiac catheterization, and cardiothoracic intensive care. As a Critical Care Transport RN, Tim has performed numerous lifesaving rescues while maintaining compassionate patient care standards. Beyond his clinical expertise, Tim's commitment to advancing emergency medicine is evident through his educational contributions, including training new graduate RNs in Critical Care Transport. His dedication earned him the 2006-2007 March of Dimes "Nurse of the Year" Award for Education, and he has shared his expertise internationally, presenting at Sigma Theta Tau International in Vienna on critical thinking in nursing. Tim's comprehensive understanding of emergency medicine, combined with his passion for excellence and education, makes him an outstanding candidate for the Star of Life Award. ★



Siera Tomas
EMT
Medic Ambulance
Service

Siera Tomas began her career at Medic Ambulance in July 2022. She is being awarded the Star of Life for her outstanding contributions as a Field Training Officer and leader amongst her peers. When asked how she knew EMS was the right career for her, Siera explains, "No other career has given me the reward and satisfaction that EMS does. After working in several other fields/industries, I finally found a craft that gives me the motivation and desire to want to stay, be better, and continuously be involved. EMS has inspired a light in me that makes me want to always improve as a provider and best serve my community. The simple qualities of EMS that do not exist in other careers are special to me: the independence, being out on the road, the duty to serve at the drop of a hat, and the fact that every day is different. Simply put, practicing medicine and helping people is fun!" Siera likes working at Medic Ambulance because Medic supports her as a provider and encourages her professional growth. She appreciates the high-quality standards and the professional relationships that she has built over the last three years. Siera appreciates the state-of-the-art equipment that Medic provides that makes her job seamless in the field. She looks forward to advancing her career to serve as a Paramedic and is currently attending Paramedic school. In her free time, Siera spends quality time with family and friends and enjoys taking day trips to local towns to explore new areas. She also enjoys hiking, camping and paddleboarding. ★