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NEWS ADVISORY

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July 2, 2018

Real-life superheroes honored for saving Missourians from burning buildings, traffic accidents, violent assaults

When a neighbor's air conditioner unit sparked a rapidly spreading fire, **Michelle Vogel**'s emergency training kicked in. Though the first floor was engulfed in flames, Vogel entered the burning apartment building, rescued a 4-year-old child, ensured all other occupants had been evacuated safely, and then turned her attention to a pregnant woman having respiratory problems, while residents awaited emergency services. Later, she donated children's clothes to the family who'd lost their home.

This summer, Vogel, a corrections officer at Western Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center, received the Director's Award of Valor, a Missouri Department of Corrections award bestowed on a staff member who has acted in a heroic or courageous manner, on or off duty, despite personal risk.

Vogel isn't the only DOC employee being honored for heroism. She isn't even the only one who has saved someone from a burning building. A dozen real-life superheroes who risked their own safety to help fellow Missourians have been recognized for exemplary service. Here are some of the courageous acts:

Tipton House Fire

While traveling home after a shift at Tipton Correctional Center, Officers **Randy Witt**, **Justin Mathis** and **Gregory Kreutzer** saw smoke and flames erupting from a home. They stopped to rescue the residents, broke down a garage door to retrieve a ladder, and saved a woman trapped on a second-floor balcony. As the fire spread, the officers warned neighbors, pushed cars out of the path of the flames, and helped an elderly man stuck behind a locked gate. Fellow TCC employees Officer **Josh Harkins** and Sergeant **Earl Roach** arrived to assist, and Officer **David Byrd**, a volunteer firefighter, helped extinguish the flames.

Traffic Accident

While on a trip with his family, **Robert Dunn**, a recreation officer at Southeast Correctional Center, stopped to help the victims of a traffic accident. After breaking a window, he and other bystanders removed a driver and two passengers from a vehicle. Dunn's wife performed CPR on an unresponsive passenger, and Dunn helped douse the vehicles with water to prevent the gas tanks from igniting. Though two people sustained fatal injuries in the accident, Dunn's quick actions helped save two other lives.

Prison Assaults

When an offender assaulted Sergeant Shane Clack at Potosi Correctional Center, repeatedly striking him on the head, Cook I **Laura Horton** and Officers **Jason Jones** and **Randy Nash** came to Clack's aid, restraining the offender and protecting the sergeant from more serious injuries.

Maggie Long was talking to an offender in a housing unit at Northeast Correctional Center when another offender attacked her with a homemade weapon. Functional Unit Manager **Tim Wood** and Sergeant **Dan Wiley** disarmed and restrained the assailant, protecting fellow staff members from harm.

Missouri Department of Corrections Director Anne Precythe and Division of Adult Institutions Director Alana Boyles presented the Award of Valor to recipients during a ceremony at Runge Nature Center June 26.

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