



## NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS FOUNDATION

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **National Community Impact Award Honors Exceptional Leadership in Saving Lives Through Living Kidney Donation**

*Celebrating the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, Knox Company, and Chief Ron Siarnicki for Their Unwavering Commitment to Supporting First Responders*

Emmitsburg, MD - February 13, 2025 – Kidneys for Communities' prestigious National Community Impact Award, which honors organizations and individuals demonstrating exceptional leadership, vision, and dedication to saving lives through living kidney donation, was presented Wednesday morning, highlighting remarkable contributions to the cause.



*Award recipients and presenters gather for a group photo  
at the National Community Impact Award ceremony*

This year's ceremony spotlighted two major awards. The first award, the Inaugural Corporate Social Responsibility National Community Impact Award, was presented to the Knox Company

for its extraordinary dedication to saving lives through living kidney donations. Under the visionary leadership of Ms. Joni Trempala, Owner and President of Knox Company, the company has played a pivotal role in expanding awareness and action within the first responder community. Despite her personal battle with kidney failure, Ms. Trempala has consistently chosen to focus on those in need. Her leadership, together with her team and in collaboration with NFFF, has sparked impactful conversations and launched the Kidneys for First Responders Program—providing first responders with renewed hope and a second chance at life.

The second award recognized the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) for its instrumental role in developing the “Expand Your Legacy: Become a Living Kidney Donor” campaign. In partnership with Knox Company and the First Responder Center for Excellence, NFFF has ignited a national movement to raise awareness, inspire living kidney donors, and launch the Kidneys for First Responders Program. Since partnering with Kidneys for Communities, NFFF has done far more than endorse the program—it has connected organizations nationwide, provided critical guidance, and ensured that the initiative meets the unique needs of the first Responder community.

While being invited to the stage to accept the award, Victor Stagnaro, Chief Executive Officer of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and the First Responder Center for Excellence, stated, “Our mission is driven by a deep commitment to our first responders and their families. By empowering the community to become living kidney donors, we are not only saving lives but also igniting hope and creating a legacy of resilience and unity.”

Concluding the award presentation, the Inaugural Humanitarian of the Year Award was presented to Chief Ronald J. Siarnicki. Recognized for his transformational leadership and unwavering dedication to the Kidneys for Communities First Responders Initiative, Chief Siarnicki’s proactive efforts and credibility have been instrumental in launching an initiative that saves lives and offers hope to first responders and their families nationwide.

“It was my great honor to invite Chief Ron Siarnicki, Executive Director Emeritus of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and the First Responder Center for Excellence, to accept his award.” said Atul Agnihotri, Board Chair & CEO, Kidneys for Communities®. “Chief Siarnicki’s leadership has set a powerful example - one that will continue to impact countless lives for years to come.”

Expressing his gratitude, Chief Siarnicki stated, “I am deeply honored to receive this award. It is a testament to the power of community and collaboration. Together, we are not just saving lives—we are building a legacy that honors every first responder’s courage and sacrifice.”

These awards recognize leaders and organizations committed to saving lives through living kidney donation underscores the collective effort and profound impact of community-driven initiatives.

For more information about the awards and the initiatives supporting first responders through living kidney donation, please visit [Kidneys for First Responders](#). A four-part video series

providing information on being an organ donor and a transplant recipient is also available on [firstrespondercenter.org](http://firstrespondercenter.org).

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### **About the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation**

The United States Congress created the NFFF to lead a nationwide effort to honor America's fallen firefighters. The mission is to honor America's fallen fire heroes; support their families, colleagues, and organizations; and work to reduce preventable firefighter death and injury. The National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Park includes the National Fallen Firefighters Monument, the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Chapel, a brick Walk of Honor®, the To Lift a Nation – 9/11 Memorial, and the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Bell of Remembrance. Information about the NFFF and the Memorial Park can be found [here](#).

### **About the First Responder Center for Excellence**

The FRCE is a National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) affiliate organization, created in 2016. Its mission is to promote quality educational awareness and research to reduce physical and psychological health and wellness issues for first responders. For more information, please visit: [www.firstrespondercenter.org/](http://www.firstrespondercenter.org/).

### **About Kidneys for Communities**

About Kidneys for Communities Kidneys for Communities is a nonprofit that partners with organizations to impact the lives of their members by offering resources about living kidney donations to members of their communities, increasing the chances of a donor directing a gift-of-life kidney to a fellow member in need of a kidney. Addressing the shortage of living kidney donors through proactive community outreach programs, Kidneys for Communities developed the first-ever national community-directed donation program. The program unlocks connections created through membership-based communities, with the goal of increasing the number of living kidney donors in the U.S. through paired kidney exchange. The Kidneys for Communities leadership team includes innovative leaders, kidney donors, social workers and medical experts in the fields of nephrology and renal transplantation — all of whom have seen this disease up close and are committed to making an impact. Please visit [Kidneys for First Responders](#) for more information.

### **About the Knox Company**

Since 1975, the Knox Company has successfully developed innovative rapid access solutions for first responders and fire and life safety executives with products that provide fast, safe, and secure entry into commercial, industrial, educational and residential properties, while minimizing damage and maximizing safety. Today, more than 15,000 fire, EMS, and law enforcement departments/agencies, as well as schools, universities and corporations, depend on Knox products to gain access into over 1 million buildings/properties and to protect their most critical assets. For more information, go to [www.KnoxBox.com](http://www.KnoxBox.com).

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