



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
FIRE FIGHTERS LOCAL 1014**  
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**\*\*\* PRESS ADVISORY/RELEASE \*\*\***

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**LA COUNTY FIREFIGHTERS WELCOME PEER SUPPORT DOGS TO  
LAUNCH NEW PEER SUPPORT K9 PROGRAM**

*LA County Firefighters will accept the donation of two fully trained peer support/comfort dogs from leading dog training foundations, Thor's Hope Foundation in partnership with Performance K9 Training, Inc. and the Patriotic Service Dog Foundation as they launch new Peer Support K9 Program for the Los Angeles County Fire Department.*

LOS ANGELES COUNTY—On Tuesday, Los Angeles County Firefighters will accept the donation of two fully trained peer support dogs from the nation's leading dog training foundations, the Thor's Hope Foundation in partnership with Performance K9 Training, Inc. and the Patriotic Service Dog Foundation, to launch the new Peer Support K9 Program.

Dogs "Milo" and "Echo" were specially selected and completed hundreds of hours of intense specialized training to support firefighters with PTSD or high levels of anxiety in a variety of situations and settings. They not only assist in identifying individuals experiencing increased levels of stress, they are also trained to comfort those individuals. These two dogs are the first in a new Peer Support K9 Program in the Los Angeles County Fire Department. Both dogs have already been deployed to assist firefighters and first responders on the recent Bobcat Fire, where crews were facing one of the largest wildfires in LA County's history which lasted over one month. *(See attached bios of dogs)*

Over the last five years, the number of suicide for firefighters has surpassed the number of line of duty deaths nationwide. As our firefighters face an unprecedented wildfire season and ever-increasing call loads with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the mental and physical health of our firefighters has never been more critical. The addition of peer support dogs will help first responders manage stress and anxiety during large-scale incidents and extended deployments.

The launch of the Peer Support K9 Program is the latest addition to LA County's robust peer support program which includes over 130 trained peers. LA County's Peer Support Program is an award-winning innovative program that has been deployed nationwide to assist firefighters and first responders with traumatic large-scale incidents. LA County's Peer Support Team has been deployed to incidents such as the murder of Captain David Rosa in Long Beach, the ambush

shooting of Firefighters in Eugene, Oregon, the Borderline Mass Shooting in Thousand Oaks, the Route 91 Harvest mass shooting in Las Vegas and multiple line of duty death incidents for first responders nationwide.

**WHO:** LA County Firefighters Local 1014 President Dave Gillotte; LACOFD Peer Support Coordinator Scott Ross; LACOFD Peer Support Dog Handler Jake Windell; Tom Tackett, Executive Director, Patriotic Service Dog Foundation; Christina Macone Greene, Vice President of Thor's Hope Foundation and CEO of Performance K9 Training, Inc.; David Greene, Founder of Performance K9 Training, Inc. and Training Director of Thor's Hope Foundation

**WHEN:** Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup> at 1:30pm

**WHERE:** Los Angeles County Firefighters IAFF Local 1014  
3460 Fletcher Ave.  
El Monte, CA 91731

**HOW:** This is a COVID-19 compliant press conference. All attendees must wear a mask and adhere to all social distancing protocols. Additionally, please RSVP to the Stephanie Saporito at [stephanie@polomapr.com](mailto:stephanie@polomapr.com).

# # #

*Los Angeles County Firefighters, IAFF Local 1014 represents the over 3,200 Firefighters, Paramedics, Dispatchers, Pilots, Wildland Firefighters, Forestry and Health Haz Mat personnel, who serve the over 4 million residents throughout Los Angeles County's unincorporated communities and 59 contract cities. Since 1949, Local 1014 has fought for better wages, hours, benefits and working conditions for our members and for world-class fire and emergency medical services for our communities throughout Los Angeles County.*

[www.local1014.org](http://www.local1014.org)

*Thor's Hope Foundation is dedicated to fostering low-income mobility impaired individuals with trained service dogs and residential facilities in need of a therapeutic facility dog. Thor's Hope Foundation provides the dogs free of charge to the Firehouse Project providing peer support dogs to fire departments. Performance K9 Training Inc. provides advanced training for the dogs donated by Thor's Hope. Performance K9 Training, Inc. was founded by David Greene who has represented the United States on four world teams with his dogs, placing third and ninth in the world. Greene is also the founder of Performance K9 Training in San Diego County and serves as the Training Director of Thor's Hope Foundation.*

<https://www.thorshope.org>

<https://performancek9training.com>

*Patriotic Service Dog Foundation matches highly trained and skilled Service Dogs with military and first responder veterans allowing their new partners to become more independent, self-confident, and comfortable with life outside of the military/law enforcement. Their close-knit community of volunteers and professional trainers work alongside deserving veterans to develop lasting and meaningful bonds with dogs that provide so much more than just companionship. Tom Tackett, Executive Director and lead trainer is very proud to provide Echo to the Los Angeles*

*County Fire Department.*

<https://www.patrioticservicedogfoundation.org>