

# IRISH ECHO FIRST RESPONDER AWARDS

## Troy Powell

**Place of birth:** Pompton Plains, New Jersey.  
**Job Description:** Firefighter for the Township of Montclair, assigned to Station 2, Truck 2. Why I chose this career: The cliché answer is 'to help people' but the reality is I find it extremely rewarding to be able to solve a resident's problem. In the fire service, we help homeowners with broken water pipes, arcing electrical outlets, gas leaks, and carbon monoxide alarms. It's not all fighting fires and it's during those 'routine' calls, you can interact with citizens and improve their condition. Another thing most people do not know, is that firefighting isn't just 'putting the wet stuff on the red stuff'. You have to understand building construction and fire science; thermal dynamics and water behavior; and its' both physically and mentally challenging. I love being a firefighter!  
**Proudest moment of my career:** Back in 2017, I founded the NJ FMBA CISM Team or Critical Incident Stress Management Team for our union, the New



Jersey Firefighters Mutual Benevolent Association. I

responded to a traumatic incident almost 20 years ago and I struggled mentally afterward. Until we had a debriefing a few days later! The relief was immediate.  
 Speaking to peers who had similar experiences and being supported by culturally competent mental health professionals provided enormous relief. When I found out those teams were barely operating in 2017, I started our own team that now services the entire State of New Jersey and responds to requests from both career and volunteer departments.  
**Something people would be surprised to know about me...** I am a yogi and practice in our in-home studio several times a week.

I am 50 years old and I have been married to my wife, Katie, for 23 years. We live with our two rescue dogs, Rascal & Poppins, in Essex County, New Jersey. I have a Bachelor of Science from the University of Vermont and I attended Newark Academy in Livingston for high school. I enjoy running and yoga while my wife and I enjoy hiking and relaxing on our deck!



## Patrick Twomey

**Place of birth:** New York City.  
**Job Description:** Lieutenant with New York City Fire Department, Ladder 41.  
**Why I chose this career?** As a child, I always stood up for others who needed help. This desire to work with colleagues to support and save the lives of people in dangerous situations motivated me throughout my career.  
**Proudest moment of my career?** Celebrating medal day with my family, while seeing the traditions and history that makes this annual event special was the

proudest moment of my career.  
**Something people would be surprised to know about me...** I'm a historian, aka history buff.

My name is Patrick Twomey. I'm a Lieutenant of Ladder 41 in the New York City Fire Department. When I'm not in the firehouse, I enjoy spending time outdoors with my wife, Katie and my two beautiful daughters, Emerson and Grey. You can catch me watching the history channel, playing catch my dog, Ozzie and coaching sports for my girls.

## Kate Deegan

**Place of birth:** Huntington.  
**Job Description:** By day, I work at a Wholesale Nursery in the Accounting Department. I chose to join the Halesite Volunteer Fire Department in 2009 as a way to get involved in my community after college. I have held many roles as a firefighter and EMT. I was the Rescue Lieutenant and Rescue Captain where I oversaw our ambulance responses, and made sure all members were properly trained in CPR and EMS response.  
 I am the secretary of my Company, the Hook and Ladder Co. I am secretary of the Department which allows me to work closely with each Chief who runs the Department during his 3-year term. I am the public information officer which allows me to communicate with our residents about various safety topics, events at the firehouse, with the media about our alarm responses, and I am the voice behind all our social media posts which highlight members, department activity, safety tips, and more throughout the year.  
 As a firefighter, we respond to alarms that vary from mundane battery checks of smoke and CO detectors, to animals trapped in the oddest places (tv antennae, walls, etc) to true fires where homeowners are relying on our 100% volunteer force to leave their homes and families to come to their aid, and we do



every time, because we know they count on us.  
 As an EMT and rescue squad member, we have an older community, so we get a lot of injuries from falls, and have many frequent fliers who we take to and from the hospital on a regular basis. We respond to all manner of recuses from COVID patients, to heart attacks, to active labor...we've seen it all.  
**Why I chose this career?** I always wanted to give back to my community; when I was 15, I started teaching Red Cross certified swimming lessons in my town, and when I came home from

college, I was looking for a way to re-engage in my community. Having no family members in the fire service, and no friends in my local department was hard.  
 I had no one to back me up, and had little support from my family for a job they determined would be too difficult. I joined and chose a difficult path, electing to get my firefighter training classes at the same time as my EMT certification. It was a rough first year but my time and efforts paid off, as I was awarded Rookie of the Year honors following my probationary year of service.  
**Proudest moment of my career?** My proudest moment has to be when my crew brought a patient who had suffered from a heart attack back to life. We know that CPR saves lives, but ultimately prehospital saves are rare. In June 2017, we were called to a local restaurant and bar for a male patient in cardiac arrest. Upon arrival we found the patient on the floor with CPR being administered by two bystanders. When my crew took over, I began giving chest compressions, feeling the patients' ribs crack as I went, then I realized that the patient was a friend of mine.  
 Despite my sadness at having to perform CPR on a friend, my crew pushed on and had a nearly responsive patient by the time we dropped him at the hospital. We were relieved to hear a

few days later that he would make a full recovery. Seeing him walk into that same bar only a few months after the incident was the best feeling, and knowing that my crew was able to bring him back; that's why we do what we do.  
**Something people would be surprised to know about me...** I never wanted to do EMS. When I first joined Halesite, I expressed interest only in being a firefighter; I didn't want anything to do with "sick people". Only after realizing the vast majority of alarms are for Rescue in our Department did, I acknowledge how irresponsible it would be to join and have no EMT certification. It has been on those calls that my skills have been most used, and I would hate to think of who I might not have helped without that additional training.  
 In my spare time, I'm a member of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians. Upon joining in 2018, I became Vice President in 2019 and then President in 2021 to present. I also am a self-professed foodie; I maintain a separate account in Instagram for all my food posts and create recipes, dining tips, and travel tips on my food blog; Nosh Your Average Foodie! I'm also a member of the Caumsett Foundation which strives to preserve the remaining buildings of the Lloyd Harbor Gold Coast Estate of Marshall Field III; this is where my grandfather grew up.