

Police officer, citizen who helped save baby commended by city

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
Friday, 01 February 2019 10:21



Officer Douglas Hoffman and Gallup citizen Casey Franchot received a written commendation from the Gallup Police Department on Jan. 23 for their role in helping save the life of a baby who was shot.

Hoffman's commendation was described as "a long time coming" at the ceremony, by GPD acting Chief Franklin Boyd.

Boyd announced at the ceremony that the child is currently on the road to recovery, thanks to the efforts of the people involved.

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Sgt. Erin Pablo read the citation about Hoffman's efforts to the room.

"Without hesitation, Officer Hoffman calmly and bravely placed his own life in jeopardy," Pablo said, reciting the event. "His actions show great bravery, courage, and his personal commitment to this department and community."

The critically injured eight-month-old baby was rescued Dec. 8 at the Zia Motel, 915 E. Hwy 66. The report from the parents was that their other three-year-old child had found a handgun and was tampering with it and it went off, shooting the baby.

Officer Hoffman was the first to arrive at the scene after the incident was called in. There, he met Casey Franchot, 43, who told him they needed to get the child to the hospital immediately.

Hoffman said that he was a small piece to this puzzle, and that the incident would not have turned out this way if not for Franchot.

"We had somebody that heard 'My baby's been shot,' and didn't care about himself or anything else. He put himself into danger, still thought of a plan to save that baby's life," Hoffman said. "That is above and beyond a police officer's duty, let alone a citizen's duty."

Mayor Jackie McKinney was present at the ceremony to commend the two men as well.

"This is the first time in my eight years we witnessed something that was exceptional, above and beyond as a citizen," he said. "What you do for law enforcement, the citizens of this community, is remarkable."

McKinney spoke about how the event blew up on social media, recounting how the city officials were hounded for information, and said that they remain silent on an issue until they get the

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facts, which usually happen after an investigation wraps.

“I feel that our staff, our council, has your backs,” he said to the room.

Franchot was also recognized and given a commendation from the Gallup City Council by Mayor McKinney, who said that this was the first time he was able to commend a citizen of the community in this way.

“Uncommon valor was at work that night, assessing the scene,” McKinney said. “These quick decisions, executed in an extremely calm and brave manner, most likely saved the life of this baby girl.”

When he got a chance to speak, Franchot said he is still at a loss for words of that night’s events.

“I think Officer Hoffman understated his own role in this,” he said. “His calm demeanor, professionalism, how he communicated on the radio, it just speaks volumes of the type of individuals out there that serve this community every day.”

The child’s parents were arrested that night, and both are awaiting their respective arraignment hearings.

By Cody Begaye

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