



# FIRE DEPARTMENT PRESS RELEASE

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## **Garden Grove Fire Department Chaplain Program**

The Garden Grove Fire Department responds to over 12,000 calls for assistance each year. Of the thousands of calls, many leave family and friends in the wake of devastation and uncertainty when they lose a family member or everything they owned. Unfortunately, many of the incidents take a toll on members of the community and first responders. Because of this, the Fire Department has recognized the need to take care of the mental well-being of everybody involved as equally important as the day-to-day service it provides. This has prompted the introduction of the Chaplain Program in the Fire Department.

The Chaplain Program was started with the intent to provide a means of counseling and spiritual help in difficult times and whenever needed. Pastor Fernando Villicana is the Department's new chaplain, and he provides his voluntary service on a 24/7 basis. His experience is unique and brings on a much-needed service to the community. Villicana's background involves 17 years of firefighter experience with the Los Angeles Fire Department, 25 years as a pastor and extensive training in counseling. He is currently the lead pastor of Firehouse Church in Brea.

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Chaplain Program  
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“Fernando has provided his service to countless families during times of crisis, and we’re fortunate to have him in our organization,” said fire chief, Tom Schultz.

When asked how he sees his role with the Fire Department, he says he’s here to support in any capacity. According to Villicana, “I’m here to listen more than to talk, this helps in the healing process.” His and the Fire Department’s goal of the program is to provide support through counseling and spiritual help to anyone needing it. Since the program’s recent inception, he has already been called out for multiple incidents where grief-stricken family members have found comfort in his support. Anyone with questions regarding the Chaplain Program can contact the Fire Department at (714) 741-5600 during normal business hours.

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