

# **Cheryl Wills is named Fire & Rescue's August Team Member of the Month**

Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue announced that Community Risk Reductions Specialist Cheryl Wills is the Team Member of the Month

The department honors members of the team who serve the community with Passion, Professionalism and Pride.

Wills grew up in Fountain Valley where her father worked in construction, specializing in HVAC systems. Her mother was a K – 4th grade teacher, and she has two older sisters.

After graduating from Mater Dei High School where she was a stand out cheerleader who competed on a national level, Wills attended Orange Coast College and Santa Ana College, where she completed several fire science classes. In 1992 she graduated from Rio Hondo's Fire Academy and was hire by Monterey Park Fire Department in 1994 where she was the first paid female firefighter in the San Gabriel Valley.

After four years as a firefighter, Wills' mom was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. With her mom's diagnosis and wanting to start a family of her own, she struggled with balancing family demands and her work schedule (firefighters work 24 hours shifts). It was at this time she decided to pursue a different career path within the fire service so she could spend time with her mom and start her own family.

Wills transferred to Fire Prevention (Community Risk Reduction) with Monterey Park Fire Department. In 2002, she was hired with Costa Mesa Fire Department (Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue) as a Fire Protection Specialist – Public Education, now an Inspector.

Notable achievements during her tenure with Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue include, but are not limited to: teaching the first Citizens Fire Academy in 2003, Overachiever Fire Civilian of the Year – 2004, Excellence in Work Performance Award – 2009, and Key Note Speaker at Ferragamo Breast Cancer where she received a standing ovation!; She also assists with our annual toy drives for less fortunate kids and is a member of Women Leading Government.

Wills is married to her husband Steve, who is a K-9 officer with Los Angeles Police Department and a Navy Veteran. They have two children Brock and Nicole.