

2007

Firefighter/Paramedic Jason Duke
Firefighter/Paramedic Joseph Lamping

Grand River Fire Department

On December 8, 2007, the alarm tones went off at the Grand River Fire Department. Smoke was reported to be coming from a garage of a residence just down the street from the fire department. Firefighter/Paramedics Duke and Lamping responded and were the first responders on scene, arriving with a pumper. Smoke was now rolling from the eaves of a four car garage attached to the home. Neighbors and police reported that a resident was inside the home. Locks prevented them from making entry to the front door, and the young firefighters were told that the resident was usually near the rear of the house. They immediately went around back, knocking down a wooden fence to access the back yard. They forced the breezeway door open, finding the interior filled with choking smoke. Staying low, they crawled under the smoke, searching the interior. They found the resident lying on the kitchen floor, and dragged him outside to safety. Lamping's facemask for his breathing apparatus became dislodged, exposing him to the potentially toxic smoke.

Several things set this rescue over and above the norm. For one thing, both of these men were rookie firefighters. Neither had had any experience with the exception of training fires. Second, there were no other fire personnel on scene. All decisions made were done by these firefighters, acting alone. Third, they entered the residence without the benefit of a protective hose line. Delaying the rescue to stretch and charge a line may have changed the outcome for the resident involved. By the time other fire personnel began arriving, the victim had already been removed and was safe. They then assisted with control and extinguishment of the fire along with five neighboring fire departments.

In his letter of nomination, Grand River Fire Chief Robert Lloyd expressed his pride in the actions of these two men. They "in the most critical time, when a life hangs in the balance, answered the call." These two members of the Grand River Fire Department deserve to be recognized for their selfless act; an act that resulted in the successful rescue of a resident, who may not have been able to rescue himself."

The Lake County Blue Coats agreed with Chief Lloyd and awarded the Jorge Medina Distinguished Service Award to both men.