

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VALLEJO FIRE DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES FIREFIGHTER YOUTH ACADEMY FOR AT RISK YOUTH IN HONOR OF FALLEN COMRADE ROBBIN MACKBEE Public-Nonprofit partnership hopes to replicate successful mentoring and career development program for at risk youth

Vallejo, Calif. | Vallejo Fire Chief Jack McArthur, Mayor Osby Davis and Superintendent of Vallejo Schools Dr. Ramona Bishop will be joined by representatives from the Vallejo Firefighters Union, Solutions for At Risk Youth and the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation to announce the launch of the new Robbin Mackbee Firefighter Youth Academy on Tuesday, July 28, 2015 at 11 a.m. at Vallejo City Hall, 555 Santa Clara Street.

The announcement comes 30 years to the day that Firefighter Mackbee lost his life in the line of duty while fighting a grass fire. Members of Mackbee's family will also be present and a representative from the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation will pay tribute to the memory of Firefighter Mackbee for his contribution and sacrifice to the community in the line of duty. Fire Department officials say the academy is a fitting way to honor Mackbee's legacy as a positive role model who spent time tutoring and mentoring youth at the Omega Boys and Girls Club in Vallejo.

"We are excited to have this opportunity to give back to Vallejo's youth and to be able to continue the great work that Firefighter Mackbee accomplished in our community," said Vallejo Fire Chief Jack McArthur. "I believe that the Fire Department can be a positive influence in the lives of our young people and I encourage any young person interested in the Fire Service to consider participating in the program."

The first Firefighter Youth Academy has been operating in Richmond for over 20 years as a youth development and mentoring program that provides life guidance and career exploration for youth who are at risk of social, academic, and/or economic failure. The fundamental principles of the academy are academic achievement, community service and self-discipline. The program has

yielded measurable results with multiple community benefits and has since been replicated by a number of fire departments with similar socioeconomic challenges.

"Having served as a firefighter for over 30 years, I have a connection with Robbin as a comrade in the fire service and as a servant of the community," said retired Fire Battalion Chief Byron Berhel who helped launch the Richmond academy and also serves as the CEO of the nonprofit Solutions For At Risk Youth. "SFARY is very excited about providing this opportunity to assist Vallejo students succeed by providing the human, technical and financial resources that are needed to help them reach their goals."

School district officials say the program is an excellent partnership opportunity to reach out to students who are at the crossroads of making choices that can lead to success or failure.

"As we continue to build our pipeline to prosperity for all students, we embrace this partnership with the Vallejo Fire Department and Solutions for At Risk Youth," said Vallejo Schools Superintendent Dr. Ramona Bishop. "This new public-nonprofit opportunity will allow our students to explore careers in public safety and public service while learning other valuable life skills."

The academy will launch a six-week pilot program in October. The full nine-month program will start in March 2016 and end in November. Learn more about the program at firefighteryouthacademy.org.

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