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**!! FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE !!**

**SFMD Fire & Life Safety Specialist selected as  
2014 Arizona Fire & Life Safety Educator of the Year**

Ask any child that has attended school here in Apache Junction who ‘Miss Tina’ is, and they will quickly tell you that she is the one who taught them about fire safety, from pre-school through high school, Miss Tina has helped educate thousands of youngsters about Stop, Drop & Roll. Our senior adult population around the community knows Miss Tina very well too! Her safety lessons for older adults are a hot commodity when winter time rolls around!

On Thursday, September 10, 2015, as part of the opening ceremonies for the Arizona State Fire School, Tina Gerola, Fire & Life Safety Specialist with the Superstition Fire & Medical District, was chosen as the State of Arizona Fire & Burn Educator of the Year. Each year the Arizona Fire and Burn Educator’s Association (AFBEA) selects a Fire and Life Safety Educator of the Year for the State. Nominated individuals were required to have made significant contributions to Fire and Life Safety Education, demonstrated outstanding work as an educator, be successful in increasing public awareness about safety issues, serve as a positive role model in their community, earned achievements in the Fire and Life Safety field, and exhibit a commitment to excellence in their educational efforts.

Mrs. Gerola was selected in a blind vote by a panel of her peers and Fire Chiefs Statewide. Nominations received by the panel only included credentials, achievements, and contributions made to the community and the department. Names of individuals and organization, as well as other personal information was redacted. Fire Chief Paul Bourgeois shared the following after Tina’s award, “We are very proud of her and all of her accomplishments. Tina’s commitment to our organization and our community is evident in the outreach and education programs she leads. Her passion for her work, and leadership in our community is a true representation of the entire fire district and its staff.”

Increasing public awareness about safety issues, and creating the partnerships and platforms needed to educate and engage our community is her mission. Whether it’s instructing fire safety curriculum in our elementary schools, educating parents and caregivers about child passenger safety and the dangers of water, or working with our aging population on the risk of falls; partnerships are key.

Tina and her counterpart from the City, Terry Crawford, Director of Apache Junctions Active Adult Center (AAC), have established a great partnership, and through this have been selected as a team, to receive a scholarship to attend the National Fire Protection Administration (NFPA) “*Remembering When*” Conference in early November of this year. Gerola is very happy about this prestigious opportunity as well, “Receiving this scholarship with Terry is proof that teamwork and community partnerships are vital to the health and safety of all of those we teach and reach out to help.” They will both learn innovative and creative ways to combine their resources, experience, and expertise to help reduce the risk of fires and falls in the homes of older adults, using NFPA’s *Remembering When* Program. This opportunity will not only benefit SFMD and AAC, but also the City of Apache Junction and other surrounding communities.

When asked about being selected as Arizona’s Fire and Life Safety Educator of the Year, Mrs. Gerola stated, “It is so easy being passionate about serving the community you grew up in and love. I’ve lived here since 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and raised all four of my adult children here. I am so blessed, I have the greatest family and job in the world”.

If you would like to know more about the SFMD, please visit our web site at [www.sfmd.az.gov](http://www.sfmd.az.gov), or call our offices at 480-982-4440.

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