

How Deputy Fire Marshal Lani Hill Inspires the Next Generation

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September is National Preparedness Month, which is held each year to help you and your family better prepare for natural disasters and emergencies. Follow along for tips from Port of Portland experts on preparedness all month long.

Emergency preparedness isn't a month-long endeavor for Port of Portland Deputy Fire Marshal Lani Hill (far left in the photo above) – it's a lifelong mission.

Hill is passionate about three things: her job, empowering young girls and saving lives. She's quite good at all three of them.

Let's start with her job. Hill has been in the fire service for 25 years. She's dreamed about working in the profession since she was a young adult. And while she didn't know a lot of women firefighters growing up, Hill had plenty of support from her family.

“As a child, I was never told I couldn't do something because I was a girl. I had the support system at home that encouraged me to be anything that I wanted. I want that thinking to be instilled in every single little girl that I meet.”



Lani Hill and other Portland Airport firefighters celebrate Pride Month

That was Hill's motivation for chairing the **Northwest Fire Diversity Committee**, a nonprofit with a mission to increase the number of women, people of color and other underrepresented groups working in the fire service in Oregon and Washington.

Last summer, Hill joined other Northwest Fire Diversity Committee members to host training sessions at the **Girls Build** camp, which teaches girls ages 8-14 how to build and construct their own worlds.

Hill and her Portland Airport Fire & Rescue team designed a confidence course and built a variety of props for the girls. They also taught them hands-only CPR, how to use an AED and the basic concepts of firefighting. The goal was to show young girls that firefighting was a career option for them – and of course to show how cool their job was.



“We wanted to inspire young girls to look beyond the horizon, explore opportunities and experience something new with the guidance of strong, confident women role models,” said Hill.

Hillsboro Fire and Rescue was honored to participate at @girlsbuildpdx over the last three weeks with @MetroWestAmb @PortOfPortland Fire @BanksFire @CCFD6 @PortlandCC and the NW Fire Diversity Council in Portland. Empowering and educating young women for the Fire Service. pic.twitter.com/UU7k5bzOOU

— Hillsboro Fire & Rescue (@HillsboroFire) [July 31, 2019](#)

Hill is improving lives in other meaningful ways as well. Our fire department leads all medical and aid responses at the PDX Airport. During normal times, we see nearly 20 million passengers each year – and tens of thousands on a given day. Our firefighters can't be everywhere at once, which makes it important to have airport employees who are knowledgeable about health and first aid in all corners of PDX.

That's why Hill started **PDX Lifesavers**, a program that provides free courses and trainings focused on health and first aid, safety and emergency preparedness to all individuals who work at PDX.

“We each have a responsibility to play a role in emergency preparedness and response, and to be able to take care of ourselves, our families, friends, co-workers and PDX customers,” said Hill. “Our PDX community has the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills that may be needed in the event of an emergency. PDX Lifesavers encompasses the essence of Port Safety's vision and culture by teaching others and giving back to our community.”



Lani Hill (right) leads a CPR class for Port of Portland employees

As part of PDX Lifesavers, Hill and other Port leaders also lead trainings on emergency preparedness and natural disaster response. When it comes to individual emergency preparedness, Hill said that the most important thing any family can do is to simply **have a plan**. A pet owner herself, Hill is also quick to remind everyone that “your **furry family** should be included.”

While National Preparedness Month might only be 30 days, we are grateful to have employees like Hill thinking about our health and safety every day of the year.