

IN MEMORIAM: SAN BERNARDINO

On December 2, 2015, 14 people were killed and 22 were seriously injured in a terrorist attack at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, California. The mass shooting took place during a training event and holiday party for about 80 employees of the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health. The tragedy and loss were devastating to the environmental health community and were felt across the country and beyond.

A moment of silence was observed on December 9 at 11 a.m. Pacific Standard Time as the entire environmental health community stood together in an expression of love, respect, sympathy, and solidarity for our fallen brothers and sisters in San Bernardino. The California Environmental Health Association set up a special fund for the victims of San Bernardino. All funds collected will be dispersed to the families. At the time of publication, over \$48,000 had been donated. To learn more about the fund and to donate, please go to www.ceha.org/pages/san-bernardino-strong.

We mourn the loss of our colleagues. From NEHA's staff and board of directors, we offer our deepest sympathies to the families, friends, and colleagues that lost loved ones. Your passion for life, your fellow man, and your work will never be forgotten and will be forever memorialized.

Robert Adams

Robert Adams, 40, was an environmental health specialist for the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health. His responsibilities included inspecting pools and food facilities during the construction phase. He is survived by his wife and 20-month old daughter. He was devoted to his family and adored spending time with his daughter. Summer, his high school sweetheart and wife of 15 years, told CNN's Anderson Cooper, "Anyone that ever met Robert would say that he had an excellent sense of humor." She wants Adams to be remembered as someone who was positive, generous, helpful, and loved everyone.

Isaac Amanios

Isaac Amanios, 60, was a supervising environmental health specialist for the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health. He immigrated from Eritrea to California in 2000 to escape the violence and repression in his home country. Amanios is survived by his wife and three children. He was a family man who doted on his children and saw his move to the U.S. as a means to provide them with a better life. A family member described him as "an amazing father, brother, amazing everything."

Bennetta Bet-Badal

Bennetta Bet-Badal, 46, was an environmental health specialist for the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health and led a team of food establishment inspectors. She was dedicated to her work and was excited to be presenting to her colleagues during

the meeting on December 2. At the age of 18 she fled Iran and traveled to the U.S. with her family to escape religious persecution. Bet-Badal is survived by her husband and three children. "Everything she touched bloomed," said her husband. "She went above and beyond."

Harry Bowman

Harry Bowman, 46, grew up in Pennsylvania and had worked in California for the past 15 years. He graduated with honors from Johns Hopkins University. Bowman was one of the earliest contributors to the National Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorism Events (CREATE), a center based at the University of Southern California that studied national security and terrorism. He was an expert in spatial data and mapping, and worked as a statistical analyst for the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health. He is survived by two daughters.

Sierra Clayborn

Sierra Clayborn, 27, was an environmental health specialist for the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health. She was described as energetic, thoughtful, and always smiling. She graduated from the University of California at Riverside in 2010. She was passionate about her work, stating on Facebook, "I love my blooming career in public and environmental health." The manager of a pizza shop that she had recently inspected stated, "She was one of the nicest health inspectors that we've ever had. She talked to us like normal people, not just doing her job."

Juan Espinoza

Juan Espinoza, 50, grew up in Mexico and moved to California in his 20s. He put himself through college at California State University, San Bernardino, and was hired as an environmental health inspector for the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health after graduation. His family noted how much he loved his job, how he lived to make his family happy, and how important education was to him. "He always mentioned that having an education is first priority and that an education is a treasure that nobody can take away from you," stated a family member. He is survived by his wife and two children.

Aurora Godoy

Aurora Godoy, 26, was an office assistant for the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health. She had been in that position for less than one year. Godoy was noted for her wide smile, humor, and open heart. She is survived by her husband and two-year old son. Her husband praised her for being a devoted mother. In a Facebook post, Godoy's aunt commented, "We will keep her flame alive so that her young son does not forget his special mother."

IN MEMORIAM: SAN BERNARDINO

Shannon Johnson

Shannon Johnson, 45, was an environmental health specialist for the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health. He traveled 60 miles every day from his home in Los Angeles to work in San Bernardino. His girlfriend called him fun, loving, and kind. His last living gesture was one of kindness as he used his body to shield a colleague, Denise Peraza, during the shooting. Peraza, who was shot in the back but survived, said that Johnson held her and said, "I got you." In a statement from his family, they remembered him as a "generous, fun-loving soul, who very much loved his family and friends.... a protector to all those he loved."

Larry Kaufman

Larry Kaufman, 42, worked at an independent coffee shop at the Inland Regional Center where the shootings occurred. He considered himself a free spirit and was known for starting up long conversations with anyone he met. As Ryan Reyes, Kaufman's boyfriend for three years, observed, "The man could have a 30-minute conversation with a cashier about his cats ... I would literally have to pull him away." In remembering Kaufman, Reyes stated, "[He was] one of those guys that everybody loved, got along with everybody, the life of the party, always funny, always creative."

Damian Meins

Damian Meins, 58, spent 28 years working for Riverside County and had recently returned to a position with the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health's Division of Environmental Health after retiring in 2010. Meins' former employer called him a "bright light" and went on to say, "I will always remember Damian as a caring, jovial man with a warm smile and a hearty laugh." His friends remember him as funny, smart, outgoing, and very friendly. He is survived by his wife and two daughters. "I just want everyone to know that he was a good man. He was an amazing man," said one of his daughters.

Tin Nguyen

Tin Nguyen, 31, was a health inspector for the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health. She graduated from California State University, Fullerton, with a degree in health sciences. She was eight years old when her family fled Vietnam. She was part of a close-knit and extended family that met every Sunday for dinner. She had planned to get engaged next year and married a year after. According to a GoFundMe page set up for her family, Nguyen was "an incredible person with a contagious smile ... you couldn't help but fall in love with her addicting personality and good sense of humor."

Nicholas Thalasinis

Nicholas Thalasinis, 52, was a health inspector for the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health. "He had an incredibly good work ethic. The job of a sanitary inspector is certainly not the most glamorous of professions. He was passionate about it. He wanted to make sure people were safe," stated the husband of one of Thalasinis' former colleagues. Thalasinis was a very devoted man and was passionate about his beliefs. His friends recall him as a man who was always willing to lend a hand. He is survived by his wife and two adult sons. "He became born again a couple of years ago, and because of that I had a very strong faith," said Thalasinis' wife, "so I know that he's in a much better place."

Yvette Velasco

Yvette Velasco, 27, was an environmental health specialist for the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health. Her family felt she embodied intelligence and ambition. Velasco was known for her easy and contagious smile, generosity, and hard work. "She was a bright young girl who showed a caring heart to everyone. She worked hard and never gave up on her dream," said a colleague. Her uncle stated, "Yvette was an intelligent, motivated, and beautiful young woman who was full of life and loved by all who knew her."

Michael Wetzel

Michael Wetzel, 37, was a supervising environmental health specialist for the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health. He was a devoted family man to his wife and six children, volunteering time to coach a local children's soccer team and often seen in his hometown running around doing errands with his six children in tow. Wetzel's wife described him as "my best friend and an incredible father who was loved by all. I have never known a better person. He loved his work and his family so much. Without him, this family will never be the same." 🙏

Sources

- Karimi, F. (2015, December 7). San Bernardino shooting: Who were the victims? *Cable News Network*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/3/us/san-bernardino-shooting-victims/>
- San Bernardino shooting victims: Who they were (2015, December 17). *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-san-bernardino-shooting-victims-htmlstory.html>
- San Bernardino shooting: Who are the victims? (2015, December 11). *BBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-35000086>