

# *A Real Hero: The Story of Derek Rhodes*

LCC Crew Supervisor Derek Rhodes doesn't wear a cape, fly, leap off of skyscrapers, or have supernatural powers. He does, however, have the single trait of every real hero – to unselfishly risk his life and help a stranger in need.



Derek was presented with the American Red Cross' Good Samaritan award – an award given to "ordinary" citizens who use life saving skills – for a selfless and heroic act that saved the life of a Valley man.

It was a regular workday for Derek; he and his crew were flailing a ponding basin on Belmont and Blythe. Derek and his crew heard a low, muffling noise coming from a nearby canal and decided to investigate. Little did Derek know that his daily routine, and life, would dramatically change in the blink of an eye. Shockingly, Derek and his colleagues found a man who weighed approximately 950 to 1,000 pounds hanging from the side of the canal! He was desperately crying and pleading for his life.

A crowd gathered around the drowning man. Paramedics, police and the fire department arrived on scene, but attempts to hoist the man out of the cold, rushing water failed; the equipment used by emergency personnel – ladders, backboards, and ropes – broke. As a last resource, the Fresno Police Department's helicopter arrived to lift the man from the canal, but the helicopter couldn't support the man's weight. The man continued to cry and plead for help; he did not want to die in the canal.

In a rush of adrenaline, Derek made a life threatening decision – he lowered himself into the canal. Placing himself between the man and the canal wall, Derek used his own body weight and astonishingly lifted the man out of the canal.

“I never thought about my own life,” says Derek. “I just knew there was another human. I did what I did!” He adds, “Most everything that happened was because of the man saying, ‘I don’t want to die like this.’ That kept on running through my head.”

That day Derek was a true hero – disregarding his own safety and put his life in danger to save someone else’s life.



Please join us in  
congratulating  
*Derek Rhodes!*