

Town of Acton

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Town of Acton Announces Recipients of the 2023 Joseph A. Lalli Merit Award



From left, Acton Memorial Library Office Manager Mary Katis, Town Manager John S. Mangiaratti, and Acton Fire Department Firefighter Paramedic Josh Ramos stand together at Acton Town Meeting on Tuesday night. Katis and Ramos were named

Acton's Municipal Employee of the Year and Public Safety Employee of the year respectively. (Courtesy the Town of Acton)

ACTON — Town Manager John S. Mangiaratti and Fire Chief Robert Hart are pleased to announce that the Town of Acton has honored two employees with the Joseph A. Lalli Merit Award for 2023 in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the community.

Acton Memorial Library Office Manager Mary Katis was selected as the Municipal Employee of the Year. Katis was honored for providing leadership and support during several transitions in the library administration over the last year.

Acton Fire Department Firefighter Paramedic Josh Ramos was selected as the Public Safety Employee of the Year. Firefighter Ramos was off-duty when he noticed a fire at a senior housing complex in Maynard on March 22, and voluntarily entered the building to help ensure all residents were evacuating.

Lalli, an Acton resident, businessman, and philanthropist, was a strong supporter of public service. He wished to leave a legacy by acknowledging a public safety employee and municipal employee each year for outstanding performance and extraordinary contributions. The Award is supported and funded by the Steinberg-Lalli Charitable Foundation.

Municipal Employee of the Year

Office Manager Katis has lived in Acton since 1997, when she moved to town with her husband George and their daughter Alexandra. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Northeastern University.

Katis volunteered extensively at the Acton Co-op Preschool and Douglas School. She began her work at the library in 2001, after noticing a job posting for an administrative assistant on the front door.

While her job was initially just one day per week and every other Sunday, Katis has grown into her role and has now worked for four library directors and assistant directors.

Library Director Maria Palacio, who nominated Katis, wrote that Katis is well-respected by both library and Town Hall staff, and often serves as a conduit among town departments due to her established relationships.

"When we think of leaders and leadership, we often think of people who head teams or departments, but we can have leaders that don't supervise people and yet make a big difference in their organizations," Library Director Palacio wrote. "An example of this kind of leadership can be found in Mary Katis."

When both the library director and assistant director resigned last year to pursue other opportunities, Katis took on additional responsibilities to ensure the library continued to function smoothly. She also served on the search committees for a new director and assistant director, and helped the new director and assistant director transition to their new positions.

"In her own quiet, classy and tactful way, Mary filled in the gaps when the former library director and assistant director resigned just weeks apart," Director Palacio wrote. "It was Mary who worked closely with our Town Manager, Trustees and others to ensure operations in the library were running smoothly despite the challenges at the time.

"Mary co-chaired the director search committee along with our Town Manager and Trustees and worked hard to convey to all stakeholders the importance of finding someone who could lead and stabilize the Acton Memorial Library as it transitioned to new leadership," Director Palacio wrote.

In her free time, Katis enjoys trips to Cape Cod, jumping waves on her jet ski, traveling, and visiting with friends.

Public Safety Employee of the Year

Firefighter Paramedic Ramos has worked for the Acton Fire Department since October 2021, when he joined the department after working at the Lexington Fire Department.

He is the father of two young children, and also serves on the Advanced Life Support Oversight Committee, in the Training Division, and as a mentor to newer paramedics.

"I believe Joshua Ramos has led by example on what a public safety employee should be," Fire Chief Robert Hart wrote in his nomination.

On March 22, Ramos was off-duty at his home when he noticed a fire across the street at an elderly housing complex.

"Josh, without a second thought, ran across the street and managed to get a number of residents out of the home before the fire was eventually put out by the Maynard Fire Department," Chief Hart wrote in the nomination.

Firefighter Ramos remained at the scene to assist his colleagues from Maynard with other fire operations.

Ramos is often heard saying that all he wants to do is serve the community. He is a strong patient advocate, and works hard to connect patients to multiple town services

because he wants every patient to receive all of the assistance they require.

"I am proud of the men and women of the Acton Fire Department who go above and beyond each and every day," said Chief Hart. "Joshua Ramos sets a tremendous example."

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