



OFFICE OF  
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# KITSAP COUNTY SHERIFF

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## Medal of Valor **Sheriff's Office awards ceremony**

**Port Orchard, Wash.** – Sheriff Steve Boyer will award the Kitsap County Sheriff's Office Medal of Valor to Deputy Justin T. Childs, for his actions in rescuing a man who was endangered by violent storm forces. The presentation will occur during a Sheriff's Office Awards and Promotional Ceremony next week.

The Medal of Valor is the highest award that may be bestowed upon an employee of the Kitsap County Sheriff's Office. Upon recommendation of the Sheriff's Office awards committee, a recipient of the Medal of Valor is nominated to the governor's office for consideration for the award of the Washington State Law Enforcement Medal of Honor.

This ceremony is one of three that are conducted each year to recognize Sheriff's personnel. The ceremony includes administering the oath of office to new employees and volunteers; length of service awards; divisional awards, promotions / retirements and Sheriff's level awards, to include the Medal of Valor.

The Sheriff's Office Awards and Promotional Ceremony is scheduled for 5:00 p.m., Thursday, June 8, 2006, in the main auditorium of the Christian Life Center, 1780 SE Lincoln Avenue, Port Orchard.

Family members and friends, interested persons and media representatives are welcome to attend.

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## **Medal of Valor**

The award of the Medal of Valor is reserved for those employees of the Kitsap County Sheriff's Office whose actions during a specific incident rise above and beyond that normally expected of law enforcement personnel.

The Medal of Valor requires extraordinary action that involves the immediate risk to life in the prevention of harm to others, or for extraordinary action involving immediate risk to life in the apprehension of dangerous persons.

During the morning of Saturday, Feb. 4, 2006, in the immediate hours following the height of the violent storm encompassing the Pacific Northwest during Super Bowl weekend, Deputy Justin Childs, 31, was on duty as a patrol deputy in North Kitsap. He was advised by radio dispatch of a need for a water rescue involving a man trapped in a summer cabin located on a rocky beach below the cliffs of President Point Road NE, Kingston, overlooking Puget Sound.

The climatic conditions at the time included average wind speeds of 40 MPH, with gusts to 70 MPH, combined with excessive precipitation, high tides, total loss of electrical power and multiple downed trees.

Accompanied by his partner, Deputy Joseph Brown, and medics from North Kitsap Fire and Rescue (NKF&R), Deputy Childs descended the 700 feet from the cliff top roadway to the beach. There they found that the wood cabin had detached from its foundation, due to the heavy pounding from high winds and the six-foot surf, and was floating out into Puget Sound. It was apparent from the initial assessment that the cabin would not stay afloat for long, as water was filling the cabin's spaces. The man inside the cabin was standing on the cabin's porch, in water up to his waist, but refusing to obey verbal directions and hand / arm signals to leave the cabin and proceed to shore.

The cabin had begun to drift further and further out into the waters of Puget Sound.

Realizing that to wait for waterborne rescue would cost precious time and almost guarantee the man's death from hypothermia / drowning, Deputy Childs tethered himself to a 100 foot rope and waded out into the raging waters. The danger to both Deputy Childs and the victim was not only the extremely harsh environmental aspects, but also the number and size of driftwood, tree trunks, flotsam and jetsam and deadheads that were pounding against the shoreline, the cliffs and the cabin.

Not quite at the cabin and battling the floating debris and wind / surf, Deputy Childs literally reached the end of his 100' rope. Knowing that his lifeline was severed, Deputy Childs continued his progress to the cabin until he was close enough to make verbal contact with the stranded man. The man's vehicle, a Chevrolet Blazer, was also afloat and being pounded by the wind and surf, knocking the SUV towards the cabin and both men.

Deputy Childs was finally able to convince the man to jump into the water and attempt to swim. Hampered by his loss of strength due to wind chill, the man struggled to keep his head above water and grabbed onto Deputy Childs, pushing him down under the surface. Deputy Childs was able to break free of the man's grasp, get control of the man in the water, then swam and dragged the victim over and around the floating debris until he was close enough to the shoreline where Deputy Brown and the medics pulled the two onto the beach.

The man was treated by medics and later released. Deputy Childs relocated to NKF&R Station 81 for decontamination; he returned home, changed into a dry uniform and returned to duty.

The son of Jerry and Kathy Childs, formerly of Poulsbo and now of Quilcene, Jefferson County, Deputy Childs grew up in a public service environment: his father, Jerry, is a retired lieutenant from Bremerton Fire Department while his paternal uncle, Jeff, is on active service with Bremerton FD, also as a lieutenant.

Deputy Childs was raised in Poulsbo and is a 1993 graduate of North Kitsap High School. He earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Central Washington University in 1998 and, after three years working as a heavy equipment operator and as a Sheriff's reserve deputy, he was hired as a full-time deputy sheriff in 2001.

Deputy Childs is assigned to the patrol division, and works primarily out of the Sheriff's Kingston Office. He resides in North Kitsap with his wife and son.

With the presentation of this award, there will be three Sheriff's personnel who are recipients of the Medal of Valor. The other two include Chief Gary Simpson, Chief of Patrol Operations, and Deputy Mark McVey, also of the patrol division and the Sheriff's Office Deputy of the Year for 2004.

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