



On Christmas Eve, Roger V. Hurley would put on his Santa Claus suit and visit children in the pediatric ward at Kaiser Hospital in Fontana.

He handed out teddy bears and other gifts and sang Christmas songs to help bring a little cheer to sick and injured boys and girls who had to spend the holiday in hospital beds.

"It was pretty awesome to see the wonder in their faces," said Hurley's daughter, Stephanie Ledford.

Hurley, 63, passed away in August with his family by his side, and while the man who became known as the Singing Santa won't be around to spread his special brand of Christmas cheer this year, his legacy lives on in the many lives he touched.

"To help people was one of my all-time biggest joys," Ledford said.

Hurley moved to Fontana as a teenager. He graduated from Fontana High School and worked at Kaiser Steel for 14 years. After that, he worked for the Fontana Unified School District for 20 years.

Hurley's community service credentials include service with multiple nonprofit organizations including the Fontana YMCA, the Kiwanis Club of Fontana, the American Civil War Society, and the Fontana Unified School District School Attendance and Review Board, which works to help chronically truant students get back on track.

One of Hurley's proudest moments was when he was sworn in as a volunteer Chaplain with the Fontana Police Department.

Hurley learned about the opportunity from one of his fellow pastors at CrossPointe Community Church in Fontana.

As a Police Chaplain, Hurley comforted the families of people killed or injured in accidents or acts of violence.

"It was really a hard burden, especially when it had to do with children passing," Ledford said.

On the way home from a tragedy, Hurley would stop by his daughter's to check on her and his grandchildren.

"My dad would drop everything if someone needed somebody to talk to, but he always made sure there was time for his kids and his wife, too," Ledford said.

Hurley is survived by his wife, Carol, his son, Shawn Hurley of Alta Loma, his two daughters, Heather Hanning of Riverside and Stephanie Ledford of Highland, his mother, Jean Hurley of Ventura, his brother, James Hurley of Alameda, two sisters, Nancy McClure of Ventura and Lisa Friedman of Studio City, and nine grandchildren.

If you know someone who goes above and beyond to serve their community, let me know so the individual can be recognized in The Rutherford Report. Send a name, contact information, and a few words about the nominee to Supervisor.Rutherford@bos.sbcounty.gov.

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