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## **El Camino Fire Academy Class 148 Celebrates Graduation** *Recruit Zulema Chavez was only female in class; plans career as a medic*

Zulema Chavez was the only female recruit to graduate from the El Camino Fire Academy this spring, a motivating factor for the future firefighter.

“I honestly loved it,” said Zulema, one of 31 recruits in Fire Academy Class 148. “When people see a female in a program like this with a bunch of guys, I guess they can’t help but judge. But I think it pushes me to do better, maybe even try harder than any of the guys. It’s a good thing.”

The graduation celebration also featured a demonstration of the recruits’ skills in controlling a structure fire and a vehicle fire. For more than 50 years, the Fire Academy has trained approximately 800 graduates who are employed in fire departments across Southern California and the United States. Many stay in the South Bay to serve their community.

Zulema, who will be the first firefighter in her family, said she hopes to one day work as a medic in an area fire department. She said the Fire Academy was both a mental and physical challenge, and a diverse learning experience.

“You have to be one hundred percent dedicated,” she said. “It’s really rewarding.”

The Fire Academy’s core content meets the highest level of firefighter training. Graduates receive California State Fire Marshal Certificates for their studies in fire control, auto extrication, confined space awareness and HAZMAT first responder operations. The Fire Academy facility in Inglewood features a 30-seat classroom and an engine room, a four-story fire rescue training tower, and a fire environment building in which students combat live fires.

Academy instructors are from the Los Angeles area and represent nearly a dozen professional fire departments. In addition, many instructors are training officers in their own departments.

For more information about the El Camino Fire Academy, call 310-660-3593, ext. 6589 or view: [www.elcamino.edu/fire\\_academy/](http://www.elcamino.edu/fire_academy/).

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### **Photo available online:**

[http://www.elcamino.edu/administration/publicrelations/photos/2017/Zulema\\_chavez\\_5x7.jpg](http://www.elcamino.edu/administration/publicrelations/photos/2017/Zulema_chavez_5x7.jpg)

Zulema Chavez was the only female out of 31 recruits from Fire Academy Class 148 to graduate from the El Camino Fire Academy this spring.