



# Royal Humane Society of New Zealand Inc.

Instituted 1898

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CHRISTCHURCH NZ

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**Case NO 1664**

**RICKY LEE TE HUKI  
PAUL BERTRAM GRAHAM**

**SILVER MEDAL  
BRONZE MEDAL**

Early in the morning of the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009 in Hulke Street, Foxton, a house caught fire. At 2.15am a smoke alarm sounding alerted a neighbour, Ricky Te Huki, to the fire in the house which was on the opposite side of the street. He went over to it and saw smoke coming from the back of the house. He initially thought it may have been coming from a shed but then he saw a ball of fire and smoke coming from high on the wall in an area in which he knew there was a kitchen. Earlier in the evening he had heard noise and he felt sure that there were adults and a child inside. He ran to the house and banged on the window calling to the occupants to get out.

A woman, who was partially obscured by smoke, appeared at the window. She was obviously disorientated but finally opened the window and he was able to pull her out. He had difficulty trying to establish who else was in the house but finally learned that there were a baby and a female still inside.

At that stage, his brother-in-law, Paul Graham who was a visitor to his house, arrived to help. He went to the back of the house and entered through the kitchen window. While he was opening the back door he looked into the kitchen and could see that the top 30cm of the walls all round were on fire and the room was full of thick smoke. He ran outside to get air and then re-entered through the back door. Ricky followed him in. Both were having difficulty in the conditions. Ricky is an asthmatic. They got out as quickly as possible. Paul then ran round to the front door which was locked and he had to break the glass with his hand to enable him to reach in and open it

Both men went into the house trying to get to a room where they thought the two occupants were. There was thick black smoke and the glow of fire. Smoke was making it difficult to see anything and there were no lights.

The door from the hall into that room was open. Both men were calling out encouraging those inside to come out, but there was no response. They could hear but not see them. Paul could hear the baby crying and the voice of a female adult as well. Attempts to find anyone in the room, by feeling around, keeping low because of the smoke, were unsuccessful.

Both of the men were forced to go out very frequently to get fresh air, each of them recalled re-entering as many as five times.

Constantly they were being affected by the smoke and heat. They were finally forced to stay out when orange flame and thick smoke came down the hall towards them and the heat became intense. At that stage there were no sounds coming from the room.

Despite their earnest endeavours, Ricky Te Huki and Paul Graham had been unable to reach the woman and child. They were both found to have perished and were recovered by the firemen.

*Vice - Patrons:* The Mayor of Auckland, The Mayor of Manukau, The Mayor of Hamilton,  
The Mayor of Wellington, The Mayor of Christchurch, The Mayor of Dunedin