

The Journey

For Survivors of Fallen Firefighters

NOVEMBER 2006 ISSUE 16

Isn't it time to move on with your life? Those words can strike a nerve with people who have lost a loved one. Yet we know how quickly the world expects people to move beyond grief. *Isn't it time to start dating? Shouldn't you pack up his belongings?* Some survivors hear those questions within months of a devastating loss.

For many people, the thought of "moving on" seems impossible, even undesirable. Moving on would mean moving away from the life you used to have, with the

person you would do anything to get back. Moving on can be terribly painful.

But moving on is not just those big milestones like celebrating the holidays in a new way, settling the estate, or going back to work. Sometimes it is just getting out of bed and facing the day when that simple act feels overwhelming. Or maybe it's writing one thank you note or saying yes to a friend's invitation for the first time or smiling again. You move on in small ways every day.

By Lynne Myhre

Wife of Theodore Myhre, Sr. (2004-IL)

My life as I knew it ended on December 20, 2004. My husband, Ted, died while directing traffic with the local volunteer fire department. My husband and I had married later in life, each bringing grown children and grandchildren to the marriage. Our blended family was/is a tightly knit group, and we each suffered our own personal loss with Ted's death.

It has been a long year and a half. A lot of tears have been shed, and there has been a lot of laughter when we remember Ted. However, I had been so immersed in my own grief that it was not until the anniversary of his death that I realized what his sons had lost. His oldest son and I had lunch that day and then went to the

cemetery. When I saw him standing there, remembering his dad, it hit me what a loss his three boys had had.

One of my grandsons has a unique way of expressing himself. He told his mom (my daughter), "I'm mad that Grampa is not here." Well guess what? I am also mad that Grampa is not here. The last two seasons of outdoor work have brought me new appreciation of what my husband did toward keeping Mother Nature in check. I get to "go around in circles" mowing, and I also get to do all the trim. And I do talk to him a lot about that.

Moving on with your life...it is so easy to say when you are not the one whose life has been so drastically changed. When it happens to you, it is a whole different world.

By Katy Smith

Mother of Robert Henderson (2005-WY)

As hard as it is for even me to believe, I finished the Salt Lake City Marathon on June 3, in 5:56:40. I was 76th out of 129 for females ages 55-59. While running the marathon, I dedicated each mile to important people in my life. Helen Worthen (mother of Eric Reiner—1999—CA) and the NFFF were mile #20!

The finish was, as I expected, very emotional. After six months of training, to finally run and finish was the thrill of a lifetime! I was laughing and crying as I crossed the finish line and they gave me the beautiful

Finisher's Medal. My husband, Gary, put it around my neck, which was special, as I couldn't have done it without his support.

The finish line was at the Olympic Plaza in SLC, where there is a wall of honor that has names of all the volunteers from the 2002 Winter Olympics inscribed. The last time we were there was with my son, Robert, when he proudly showed us his name. He was definitely an inspiration, and I felt him cheering me on. I had written on a card in my pocket, "If Robert could run into a burning building, I could run a marathon."

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As I write this on Sunday (the day after), I've decided it was a lot more fun running the marathon than recovering from it. There isn't much that doesn't hurt. But I'll have the memory of the accomplishment for the

rest of my life. If I can run a marathon, who knows what else I can do? It's a really awesome feeling.

You can read more about these firefighters in the Fallen Heroes section of the Foundation's Web site at www.firehero.org.

We need your help!

The Fire Service Survivors Network is a group of survivors who do outreach to people who have recently lost a firefighter. Especially in the beginning, contact with others who have walked a similar path can be an important source of hope. And those who have experienced a similar loss can say, "I understand," in a way that no one else can.

The Network was formed almost ten years ago, and many of the original members are still active. Others have, understandably, moved on to other things, and we now need to add more people to the Network. We are especially looking for survivors who have lost a firefighter within the past six years - parents, spouses and significant others, siblings, and adult sons and daughters of fallen firefighters.

If you volunteer for the Network, you may hear from us a few times a year, with the names of several people who have recently lost a firefighter. We will ask you to write a letter to each person, offering understanding and support. Some people will never respond, but we know of many close friendships that have developed from these contacts. What is most important is that people understand that they are not alone and that resources are available if they need them.

Many Network members also volunteer to help with the Memorial Weekend. If you would like to be involved with the Network, please contact Linda Hurley at (301) 447-7693 or lhurley@firehero.org for more information.

PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS' BENEFITS PROGRAM

Did You Know...

The completely rewritten Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) regulations were published as the final rule effective September 11, 2006. These new regulations not only allow for the implementation of the "Hometown Heroes Act" of 2003 that covers eligible line-of-duty heart attacks and strokes, but also provides easy-to-use hyperlinks to other key PSOB definitions and terms.

To view these revised regulations, visit:

http://www.ojp.gov/ogc/PSOB_Act_and_Regulations__2006.htm.

For details or questions regarding the new regulations, do not hesitate to call the PSOB Director at 202-307-2858.



BJA **Bureau of Justice Assistance**
Office of Justice Programs ■ U.S. Department of Justice

Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program

Toll-free
1-888-744-6513

PSOB Online
<https://www.psob.gov>

We want to hear from you...



Grief can be the cruelest of teachers. There is really no preparation, and all the lessons are learned as you go. Yet people often realize, a year or so after the death of a loved one, just how much they have learned. They have done things they never imagined possible; they have survived a situation that once seemed impossible to survive. Would you like to share what your loss has taught you about life, love, yourself, and those around you? Please send us your story as a Word document, or in the body of an e-mail, to firehero@firehero.org. Or, if you don't do computers, send it to:

The Journey • **National Fallen Firefighters Foundation**

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This publication was supported by Grant #2006-DD-BX-K017, awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs; and by a September 11 recovery grant from the American Red Cross Liberty Disaster Relief Fund.