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Benefits (PSOB) Programs are a unique partnership effort of the PSOB Office, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), U.S. Department of Justice and local, state, and federal public safety agencies and national organizations, such as the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, to provide death, disability, and education benefits to those eligible for the Programs.

Toll-free: 1-888-744-6513

2013 Hal Bruno Camps for Children of Fallen Firefighters

Children whose parent has died can benefit from having a safe place where they can relate to other children and know they are not alone. Now in its second year, the Hal Bruno Camp for Children of Fallen Firefighters is open to children and stepchildren of firefighters who have been honored at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

The next camp, for children ages 4-6 and their surviving parents, will be held August 8-11, 2013, in Orlando, Florida. If you have a child between the ages of 4 and 6 who may benefit from this camp, we would be happy to answer questions or send you information. Please contact Linda Hurley for more information at lhurley@firehero.org or (301) 447-7693. The registration deadline is July 12.

We had such a great experience. It was wonderful to be safe with other families in similar situations and to be surrounded by caring members of the fire service family. It is an experience we will never forget. ~Parent, 2012 FL Camp

I had fun at camp playing games and playing with the other kids. I was sad to leave. ~Camper, age 6, 2012 FL Camp

We want to hear from you about...



How have your experiences changed you? Survivors often say that the death of a loved one "taught me how strong I really am."

What hidden strengths did you discover in yourself? What actions have you taken that you never dreamed you would take? What have you learned to do because your new circumstances required you to learn it?

If you'd like to share your thoughts on this topic or other aspects of your personal journey, please e-mail a Word document (and pictures!) to Jenny Woodall at jwoodall@firehero.org by July 15, 2013. If you don't do computers, send a typed or neatly handwritten copy to:

The Journey
National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
P.O. Drawer 498
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

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The For Survivors of Fallen Firefighters Journey

MAY/JUNE 2013 ISSUE 54

“*Precious memories, unseen angels
Sent from somewhere to my soul
How they linger ever near me
And the sacred scenes unfold*”

~ J.B.F. Wright, 1925

Memory takes on a special significance after a life has ended. When there are no new memories to be made with that person, it's easy to focus on all the memories you'll never have—your father never walking you down the aisle, the grandchildren that won't arrive, Christmas with its lovely traditions disrupted. Part of the grief is for the future you imagined.

When you start to reflect back on the life you shared, at first the memories may be deeply painful to revisit. What once made you laugh until your sides hurt may now leave you weeping. But hopefully, as you move through grief, you will begin to see those memories as treasures, touchstones, points of connection to that person you love

still. It may feel bittersweet. You may be laughing and crying all at once for a while. When you are balancing joy and sadness, this makes complete sense.

When you feel ready, take those memories out again. Dust them off. Write them down. Share them with others. Throw back your head for the belly laugh. Let your memories be a balm for your tender heart, a light on dark days. Carry those precious times forward with you as you find your new way.

In this issue of *The Journey*, survivors share some of their favorite memories. If you have a favorite memory you'd like to share, write it down and send it in so we can feature it in a future issue.

By Donna Auch, Wife of Steve Auch (2010-IN)

I have so many wonderful memories of Steve for which I am grateful. We had a life of laughter, love and living every moment to the fullest. There were times Steve would follow me home from our daughter's house after a grandson's birthday party. Usually I had met him there after work. Steve would call me on my cell and ask, "Where are you?" I knew that he knew he was right behind me, but playing along I would tell him I was somewhere totally not where we were. He would say, "Really," like it was amazing. I would start into fits of giggles, and it would go on from there.

Even in his fifties, Steve was blessed with no gray hair. Of course only my hairdresser knows for sure if I do. There

were times Steve would sit in his chair at night with our dog, Casey, tucked in beside him. He would say, "There are two creatures in this house that have grey hair. I wonder who they are." My response was, "Shut up, baldy." Steve wasn't bald, yet.

My favorite memory—this is hard, because there are so many—would be the last trip we took. We were blessed to take 2-3 trips every year. In the fall of 2010, we decided to venture to Gordonsville, Virginia. Steve was always interested in history and the Civil War. Actually any war; I believe it's a guy thing. We visited three presidents' homes in the area and stayed in a cabin in the woods.

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Donna Auch *continued from page 1*

Steve was able to get three days of golf in while I went exploring and shopping. We spent one day just exploring the battlefields together.

When we visited Montpelier, I noticed they were setting up event tents. I asked about it and was told it was for their once-a-year steeplechase race. That evening I went online and found where we could purchase tickets. We bought tickets, a couple of canvas chairs, and a small cooler. I packed a lunch, and off we went on Saturday morning. There were two track races, five steeplechase races, a Jack Russell race, and even a stick pony race for the children. The tailgating



Steve & Donna Auch

competition was what drew my attention. We found an awesome place to set our chairs where we were able to see just about all of the events. Steve and I really enjoyed the day. We talked about coming back with friends and maybe even entering the tailgating contest. The last day of our trip we decided to have dinner at a quaint French restaurant in Gordonsville. That night at dinner Steve took my hand and spoke of his love for me. He said that of all the trips we had taken together, this was his favorite. Steve always made me feel loved and cherished, but this night was so special. I will always remember the way he made me feel. The love I have for Steve continues.

By Bonnie Hall, Wife of Firefighter Sid Hall (2007-IN)

What would sum up my husband, Sid, perfectly was his love for our family of four, and his dedication to the fire service shown in this wonderful winter memory. Fridays were family night, which gave us a time to play together. One Friday night in the midst of playing some games, the fire pager went off, and out the door Sid went to a house fire. As I listened to the fire scanner I knew it was going to be a long night, so the boys and I finished playing a game, and I sent them off to bed. During the night it snowed as the firefighting turned into an investigation.



Sid and the boys

When my husband came home in the morning the boys were still asleep. So Sid changed from fire gear to snow gear, woke each boy up, and off they went outside to build a snowman and have a good ole snowball fight. At one point Sid popped his head back in the kitchen door and asked if I was fixing breakfast. Of course, I was fixing their favorite—French toast, along with the hot chocolate that was for the night before.

This is a wonderful memory I have cherished these many years that always brings a smile to my heart.



By MaryRose McNamee, Wife of Steven McNamee (1993-IL)

This photo was taken during the Christmas holidays, 1982.

When Steve and I were dating, I was getting ready to drive home after we had spent the day together. As I was putting my jacket on, Steve came up to me to help me, singing, "Button up your overcoat, when the wind is free. Take good care of yourself. You belong to me!"

He was flashing that fabulous, wide smile that always melted my heart. I remember that moment as the point where I knew I had someone who loved me and wanted to protect me. It's always been a "makes my heart stop" memory.



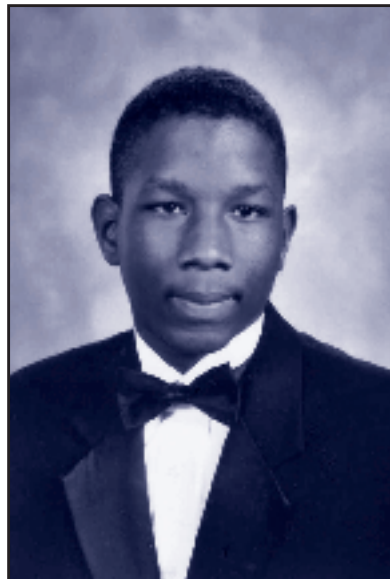
Steve and MaryRose McNamee

By Theresa Jackson-Fletcher, Mother of Jason Jackson-Hampton (2002-TN)

Jason was a rose that grew out of concrete. He was the lifeline of the family. When he passed away at the young age of seventeen, he took something from all of us with him.

Jason was a volunteer at the Almadale Fire Department from 2001 to 2002. He was killed on the truck after it went into a ditch while responding to a call. He had just graduated from high school and was on his way to serve in the U.S. Army.

Jason was born in New Orleans, and we moved to Tennessee in December 1999. He attended Smyrna High School, where he was a member of the ROTC. He was introduced to the firefighters/police officers when they visited the school. Jason became a volunteer immediately and began spending all his time at the station.



Jason Jackson-Hampton

On September 5, 2002, a call came in on his walkie-talkie. He asked if he could respond to it; and I said yes, but hurry back, because I had to go to work. Our son, brother, cousin, nephew, and friend ran out the door to his death. The next phone call I received, thirty minutes after he left, was from a police officer stating my son had been in an accident.

Jason was loved, and he touched all the people whose path he crossed in such a short span of life. He is survived by his sister, Quintella; his brother, Graylon; and a host of family and friends.

It's been ten years, and I have accepted the strength from God to share my experience, strength, and hope to all who have been through what I'm going through. This is a journey.

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“ *A thing of beauty is a joy forever.* ”
~John Keats