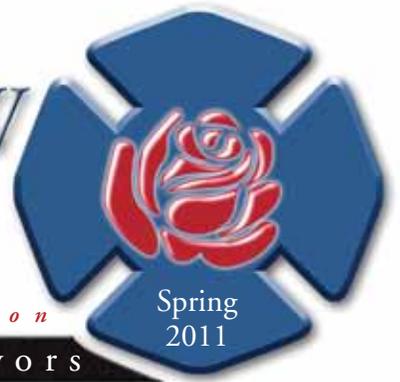


FACING TOMORROW TOGETHER

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
A Newsletter for Fire Service Survivors



2011 MEMORIAL WEEKEND LOGO CONTEST



his year, for the first time, we asked survivors who have a firefighter honored at the National Memorial to help us create the logo for the annual

National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend. The 2011 Memorial Weekend logo honors firefighters who died in the line of duty in 2010 and previous years and also commemorates the 30th anniversary of the Memorial Weekend.

We received many great entries, along with heartfelt notes about how people were inspired to create the designs. The winning logo was submitted by Jesse Gigandet, whose brother-in-law, Jeffrey Howell (2004-NY), died in the line of duty.

Congratulations, Jesse! What a wonderful tribute to Jeffrey, your family, and the firefighters and families who will be honored during the 2011 Memorial Weekend.

We'd like to thank all of our survivors who shared their time and talent with us in the 2011 Memorial Weekend logo contest. Your hard work is greatly appreciated!

BY JESSE GIGANDET

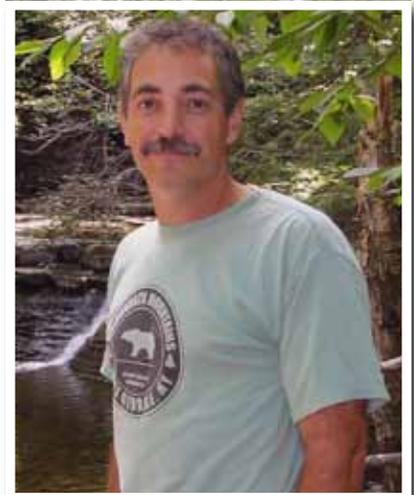
After the devastating loss of my wife's brother (Jeff Howell), his wife, Cindy, was contacted by The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation regarding that year's Memorial Weekend. When she extended her invitation to our family and those closest to him, we gladly accepted.

What we didn't expect was the incredible outpouring of kindness and generosity of so many volunteers and members of the Foundation who went out of their way for us. From the moment we stepped off of the plane, there was someone there to guide us, feed us, make sure we had transportation to our lodgings, provide support groups—every detail had someone there to offer assistance and reassure us.

The services we attended were overwhelmingly beautiful tributes to all who had perished in the line of duty that year.



Jesse Gigandet,
2011 Memorial Weekend
Logo Designer and
brother-in-law of Jeff
Howell (2004-NY)



The experience of that weekend, especially the kindness of all of the people who went out of their way to help, leaves an indelible impression on all families who attend.

It was my pleasure putting the time into this for such a terrific cause. The memories of the Weekend events still bring tears to my eyes when I think about it. The service you provide affects so many people, so deeply, and for so many years afterward. Words can't thank all of you enough for all of your efforts to remember the fallen in such a beautiful, giving way.

I am truly humbled that my logo design was chosen out of the many that were submitted, but even if it wasn't selected, it was a privilege to have the opportunity. I'm honored to offer anything I could in appreciation for the support and memories we gained from our experiences there. My design was inspired by that experience. I did my best to represent all past and present firefighters who will never be forgotten... with a subtle, extra nod to Jeff — he wore helmet number 1.

Many thanks to all who offer their support to so many people during these difficult times, and bless the families who have experienced those losses. ■

FIREHERO RACING 2011

DAYTONA 500 - FEBRUARY 20, 2011



The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) was honored during a special firefighter appreciation and fundraising event at the 53rd running of the Daytona 500 on Sunday, February 20, 2011. More than 800 firefighters and 47 survivors attended Fire Hero Racing, joining thousands of NASCAR fans.

The event was kicked off by Florida's Pipes and Drum Bands. NASCAR drivers Jeff Burton, who drives the 31 car for Richard Childress Racing, and Aric Almirola, number 88 of JR Motorsports, greeted the attendees. "It was a great day for the Foundation and the families we serve, as well as a great day for racing," said Chief Ronald J. Siarnicki, Executive Director of the NFFF. "Everyone had a good time and was happy to support such a worthwhile cause."

A portion of the proceeds was donated to the Foundation, thanks to the generous contributions of numerous corporate sponsors, including: Star & Shield Insurance, Motorola, Amkus, Arctic Ease, Waterous Company, Air Methods, Silvertowne Mint, Weinbrenner Shoe Company, American Fire Training Systems, Savatech, Government Services Group, and Fail-Safe.

Many thanks to Travis Connolly and Doug Swartz, from Clearwater Fire & Rescue, who worked with Foundation staff as local liaisons. Also, thanks to the following organizations that provided breakfast and keepsakes for survivors on the morning of the race: Clearwater Fire & Rescue Honor Guard, National Honor Guard Academy, Pinellas County Fire Chiefs, and Manatee County Honor Guard.

This was the first of four national fundraising events this year to support the programs and services provided by the Foundation and to honor our nation's firefighters. For full details about FireHero Racing, visit <http://fireheroracing.com>.

AUTO CLUB 400 NASCAR SPRINT CUP SERIES - MARCH 27, 2011

Another fine day of racing! The Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, California, also hosted a NASCAR Fundraising event for the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. The event began with a hospitality event and a special appearance by driver Bill Elliott, who accepted questions from the audience. There were door prizes, music, and a special time for survivors, staff and the fans to



socialize. Survivors were then led to a hospitality suite on Pit Road. What an incredible experience for all! We plan to return to California again in 2012.

It was wonderful seeing old friends and meeting new survivors from the California area. The race was exciting, and meeting all the people who came to our hospitality tent was wonderful. The best part was hugs from other survivors and being able to hear their stories of their special firefighters.

—JoAnn Gettman, mother of Matthew Black (1999-CA)

We had a wonderful time and especially appreciated getting to know the staff from NFFF, meeting up with other survivors that we already knew, and meeting some new survivors that will forever be friends. The opportunity to meet in such a relaxed and friendly atmosphere was very soothing and helpful in many ways. I thought it would be difficult to attend a race without my husband, but you all made me feel so welcome and loved that I found myself enjoying the event. Thank you!

—Joyce Wahlstrom, wife of Calvin Gene Wahlstrom (2008-UT)

We thoroughly enjoyed our time with other survivors. It was a wonderful weekend. Our daughter was able to connect with other survivors and was able to talk about the loss of her precious best friend and brother, an opportunity she's not experienced before this. Thank you, NFFF, for giving us a place where we can share our hearts!

—Steve, Marci & Andriana VanderGriend, parents & sister of Zachary VanderGriend (2008-MT)

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Remembering

FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS



Heather DePaolo-Johnny (2002-CA)
Sent by her mother, Sylvia Kratzke



We continue to honor Heather through the Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo and through her memorial endowment at Heifer

Foundation. The people at Heifer were very taken with her story and came to Buffalo to interview us. I met the CEO last October in Little Rock where they are headquartered, and he asked me how I became involved with volunteering for Heifer. I told him the story, and he sent his development coordinator to visit and record. It is our goal that good things will happen in Heather's name. After all, it was she who told us she wanted to leave this world a better place.

To view the interview, go to: <http://heifer.giftlegacy.com>.

Click on "donor stories" on the left-hand side, and scroll down to read "I Want a Llama for Christmas." Thanks for reading and watching.



Jeremy LaBella (2007-PA)
Sent by his parents, Chuck and Pamela LaBella



In February 4, 2011, a gazebo was built and dedicated where Washington, Pennsylvania, firefighter Jeremy LaBella died in the line of duty four years earlier. The material for the gazebo was donated by 84 Lumber Co., and the labor was provided by firemen and other volunteers.

A volunteer firefighter with Canton Township for 12 years, Jeremy realized his dream of becoming a career firefighter with Washington just six months before his death. He was the first firefighter to die in the line of duty in the 100+ year history of the Washington Fire Department. Jeremy was from a fire service family; his father and uncles are also firefighters. Jeremy is greatly missed by his friends, family, and members of both departments, and especially by his mom, Pamela; dad, Chuck; sister, Jill; brother-in-law, Jason; nieces, Megan and Haley; and nephew, Noah.



RACING *continued from page 2*

1st Annual Firefighter Appreciation Event
NASCAR Nationwide Series - July 23, 2011
Nashville Superspeedway - Nashville, TN

Attend a pre-race celebration and NASCAR Nationwide Series race at Nashville Superspeedway. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the programs of the NFFF. This special package includes:

- Federated Auto Parts 300 NASCAR Nationwide Series Race Ticket (\$50 price level)
- Admission to a special NFFF hospitality area that will include food and beverages
- Donation to the NFFF
- Post-race concert immediately following the race



4th Annual Firefighter Appreciation Event
NASCAR Sprint Cup Series - October 2, 2011
Dover International Speedway - Dover, DE

Attend a pre-race celebration and race No. 2 in the "Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup" at Dover International Speedway. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the programs of the NFFF. This special package includes:

- Race ticket (\$84 price level)
- Trackside Tour on the racing surface while teams prepare for the race
- Corporate style hospitality including all-you-can-eat buffet and beverages
- Special guest appearances
- A monster good time!

Survivors who want to attend an upcoming NASCAR event should contact Linda Hurley at lhurley@firehero.org or (301) 447-7693. ■



ANNUAL SURVIVORS CONFERENCE



The 6th annual Fire Service Survivors Conference was held May 1-5 in San Antonio. It was the largest conference to date, with about 100 survivors in attendance. In keeping

with the regional flavor, the conference included Mexican food, country line dancing, a trip to the Alamo and the beautiful River Walk, and cascarones—colorful confetti-filled eggs broken over the heads of companions for good luck.

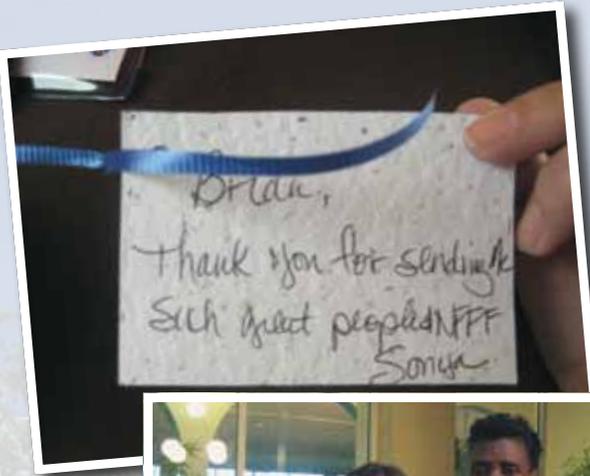
Survivors attended workshops on topics related to grief and healing, wellness, practical life skills, and providing outreach to others. They spent time getting to know one another in small groups, during meals and outings. They did the hokey pokey and the chicken dance. New friends were made; connections with old friends were renewed. There were tears and memories and lots of laughter.

As people traveled home again to Tennessee, California, Massachusetts, and Colorado (and 20 other states), we hope they went with happy memories, the knowledge that a friend is no more than a phone call/e-mail/text away, and their hearts a little lighter, but also fuller, than before.

GOT PICTURES?

If you want to share or view photos from the Survivors Conference, you can upload and download photos from www.dotphoto.com

Username: nfffphoto Password: fhguest



CONFERENCE HELD IN TEXAS

Thank you very much for the opportunity to attend the NFFF Survivor Conference. I did have a wonderful, thought provoking, helpful and down right nice time. Yes, at times it was somewhat overwhelming, especially when you're pretty shy, numb at times and just sad as well as lonely. It was something I needed to witness that I am not alone or crazy.

There are three things that I want more than anything: a hug, a kiss and to SMILE again. The conference proved to me that the smiles will come in time. Thank you.

This morning I woke up thinking about the Alamo, how it was this important historical site sort of lost in this big modern city. Then I thought, the Alamo and survivors are sort of the same. On the outside, nothing has changed, and the world around has moved on.

When you go inside the Alamo, as well as our hearts, we see that we both have grown somewhat, but we still have parts of the past so close. The Alamo has the wonderful tributes to all the lives that were lost, and we have the wonderful memories of our loved ones. The Alamo has moved forward with electric, a gift shop, and the beautiful grounds, while holding on to the past. As survivors, we too move forward, making decisions, making new friends, and hopefully smiling while holding our past and loved ones in our hearts. This all happens while the world around us grows.

We (the Alamo and survivors) have both learned to adapt and function differently, but for the better, in this ever changing world.

Cheryl Johnson, *Wife of Mark P. Johnson (2010-IL)*



SURVIVORS ATTEND CFSI DINNER

Fourteen survivors of firefighters who have been honored on the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial were special guests of the Foundation at the Congressional Fire Services Institute's 23rd Annual National Fire and Emergency Services Dinner on Thursday, April 7. The evening's theme, "Remembering Honor, Courage and Sacrifice," featured addresses from the leaders of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus and award presentations for fire service leadership.

We want the families to know the legacies of their loved ones are remembered by so many in the fire service, and inviting them to be our guests at this event is just a simple gesture we can offer to show our support.

Ron Siarnicki, Executive Director of the NFFF.

My daughter and I truly enjoyed ourselves, and the opportunity to meet other survivors is always something very special to us both. Thank you so very much!

Bob Hopler, son of Willard Hopler (1996-NJ)



The Congressional Fire Services Dinner was a great opportunity to catch up with NFFF friends and make new ones. Listening to the various speeches reinforced my awareness of how many organizations support the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and the many ways they accomplish that.

Arlene Zang, mother of Robin Zang-Broxterman (2008-OH)

MEET THE STAFF

JEANNE TOBIA

When Jeanne Tobia joined the Foundation staff in 1998 as an administrative assistant, she was one of only two full-time staff members. (For the record, there are now 17.) Over the years, she has worked in nearly every aspect of the Foundation, including family and fire service programs, Memorial Weekend planning and coordination, finance, Walk of Honor, trade shows, and whatever else needed to be done.

Currently, Jeanne manages firefighter fatality case files and works primarily in the Foundation's Fire Service Programs Section, where she provides administrative support for the Local Assistance State Teams and the Taking Care of Our Own® training. She also coordinates family escorts and on-campus housing for the Memorial Weekend.



If you have attended a Memorial Weekend or Survivors Conference, you may also know Jeanne as the Transportation Coordinator. With her firefighter husband, Matt, she coordinates ground transportation and logistics for many Foundation events.

Jeanne lives in Crofton, Maryland, with Matt, her children, Hanna and Doc, and a menagerie of four-legged friends. Jeanne also serves as a counselor and director of a cooking program at the Mid-Atlantic Burn Camp for children.

“I am incredibly blessed to work for an organization where it never feels like I am “coming to work.” When I first started with the Foundation, my hope was to make a day, or even a moment, a little brighter for someone. I have found that I often get so much more back in return than I could ever

give. The strength and courage of our survivors is truly an inspiration. I thank them for allowing me to be a small part of their family.”



EVERYONE GOES HOME[®]



In 1992, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation was created to help support the surviving family and departments of firefighters who die in the line of duty. In 2004, we expanded our mission to include prevention of firefighter line-of-duty deaths. The Foundation held a summit in Tampa, Florida, to develop strategies which address preventable causes of line-of-duty deaths. The 16 Life Safety Initiatives were developed, and the *Everyone Goes Home*[®] (EGH) program was launched with grant funding from Fire Act, and with the help of Fireman's Fund Insurance.

In each upcoming issue of this newsletter, we will focus on one Life Safety Initiative and the specific programs being developed to address that initiative.



LIFE SAFETY INITIATIVE NO. 1

To define and advocate the need for a cultural change within the fire service relating to safety; incorporating leadership, management, supervision, accountability and personal responsibility.

This initiative hits at the core issues related to safety and preventable injuries and losses. Among the most effective ways of advocating for cultural change is through the EGH Advocate program. The Advocate program was developed in 2007, in an effort to enhance the effectiveness of the EGH program, and to serve as a conduit to bring attention to all 16 Life Safety Initiatives. The strength of the Advocate program is that advocates develop strategies at the local level for outreach opportunities. In 2010, the program added function-specific advocates to focus on the needs of volunteer, metro, and wildland firefighters.

In addition to the Advocates' outreach efforts, many have become trainers for an EGH training course known as *Courage to Be Safe*[®] (CTBS). This course was rolled out in 2006 and has become a cornerstone of the EGH's training efforts. The four-hour course outlines all of the 16 Initiatives and drives home the need to change the fire service's culture of safety. One of the values of the course is that it encourages students to think more critically about safety. Any one of them may be the one who sees an unsafe

practice and tells a supervisor, breaking the chain of events which could lead to serious injuries or worse.

Over the past few years, advocates from across the country have started their own grassroots effort to embed *Courage to Be Safe*[®] into the recruit training within their jurisdictions. Advocates in Pennsylvania and North

Dakota have obtained grants to deliver the course in their states. Other states, including Ohio and Louisiana, have begun requiring the training, after state fire service training officials and commissions noted its value. The New York State Training Academy has incorporated *Courage to Be Safe*[®] into its program, and students are able to receive four hours of continuing education credit for the year.

The Texas State Fire Commission now requires that every firefighter in the state receive the CTBS training.

Our hope is that, through the efforts of this program, America's firefighters will be safer and healthier as they work to protect the public's safety. For more information about the 16 Life Safety Initiatives and how you can help, visit www.everyonegoeshome.com.



SAVE THE DATE 2011!

July 23, 2011

NASCAR Event to benefit NFFF

Nashville Super Speedway --

Nashville, TN

October 2, 2011

NASCAR Event to Benefit NFFF

Dover International Speedway --

Dover, DE



October 14-16, 2011

30th Annual National Fallen

Firefighters Memorial Weekend

Emmitsburg, MD

weekend.firehero.org

For additional information on
upcoming events, visit

www.firehero.org.

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