

## SAVE THE DATE!

**March 24, 2013**

*AUTO CLUB 400 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series*

Auto Club Speedway, Fontana, CA

<http://fireheroracing.com/fontana.html>

**April 1, 2013**

*2013-2014 NFFF Scholarship Applications  
must be postmarked and mailed*

<http://www.firehero.org/resources/families/scholarships/sarbanes.html>

**April 20, 2013**

*Fire Service Volunteer Training for Kids Camp*

Baltimore, MD

Contact: [lhurley@firehero.org](mailto:lhurley@firehero.org)

**April 25, 2013**

*Stop, Drop, Rock & Roll at FDIC*

Indianapolis, IN

[www.stopdroprocknroll.com](http://www.stopdroprocknroll.com)

**May 9, 2013**

*CFSI Fire Caucus Dinner*

Washington, DC

[www.cfsi.org](http://www.cfsi.org)

**June 7-9, 2013**

*Hal Bruno Camp for Children of Fallen  
Firefighters (ages 7-17)*

Westview on the James, Goochland, VA

[www.comfortzonecamps.org](http://www.comfortzonecamps.org)

**June 29, 2013**

*Quaker State 400*

Kentucky Speedway, Sparta, KY

<http://fireheroracing.com/sparta.html>

**August 8-11, 2013**

*Hal Bruno Camp for Children of Fallen  
Firefighters (ages 4-6 with parent)*

Orlando, Florida

Contact: [lhurley@firehero.org](mailto:lhurley@firehero.org)

**September 29, 2013**

*6th Annual Firefighter Appreciation Event  
NASCAR Sprint Cup Series*

Dover International Speedway, Dover, DE

<http://fireheroracing.com/dover.html>

**October 4-6, 2013**

*32<sup>nd</sup> Annual National Fallen Firefighters  
Memorial Weekend*

Emmitsburg, Maryland

[weekend.firehero.org](http://weekend.firehero.org)

For additional information on upcoming events, such as 9-11 Stair Climbs and Golf Tournaments in your area, please visit [www.firehero.org](http://www.firehero.org).

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HELP US stay in touch.  
Please remember to notify us at [firehero@firehero.org](mailto:firehero@firehero.org)  
when you have a change of mailing or e-mail address!

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# FACING TOMORROW TOGETHER

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation  
A Newsletter for Fire Service Survivors



## WHY I VOLUNTEER WITH THE NFFF

By Gregg Turner

Uncle of Sekou Turner (2002-CA)

**"I**t's a good thing you are doing."  
"Why do you do it?" "Were you and your nephew close?"

These are some of the comments and questions I get from individuals in the

firefighting profession since I have been a returning survivor representing my nephew, Sekou Turner, who died in the line of duty in 2002.

For a short period of time in his life, Sekou (pronounced SAY-koo) did not make the right choices. At age 19, he was attacked in San Francisco and stabbed in the heart. He actually died in the emergency room at San Francisco General Hospital.

He was miraculously given a second chance to live.

Following his recovery he attended church and said to the church members, "The head physician of the trauma unit was on duty the night I was stabbed and worked on me before I went to the operating table, but it was the chief physician that gave me my wake up call. His services were free, but they were priceless." Sekou also gave thanks to the San Francisco Fire Department for their quick response time that meant the difference between life and death. This fueled Sekou's desire to become a member of the firefighting profession.

He eventually enrolled into the firefighting program at Chabot Junior College, which led to him becoming a seasonal firefighter for the Marin County Fire Department for three years. During this time he also completed his EMT training. His dream of being a firefighter became

a reality. One of his classmates said, "He went out and completed the classes, worked hard, pushed himself, and accomplished what he said he would do." In July 2001, Sekou was hired by the Alameda County Fire Department as a probationary firefighter.

Early on the morning of Wednesday, May 22, 2002, while responding to a medical call, Sekou suffered a fatal heart attack after helping to load an individual onto the ambulance.

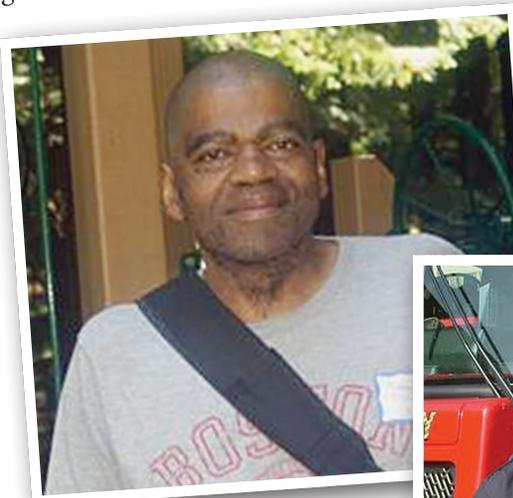
Sekou will always be remembered for his sense of humor and fun loving spirit. He is deeply missed by friends, family, and a profession that is second to none when taking care of its own.

In 2003, when he was honored at the National

Fallen Firefighters Memorial in Maryland, his parents elected not to attend. I asked them for their permission to attend so a family member could represent him. I have been attending the Memorial Weekend on and off since 2005 as a volunteer. I have not met a group of people so warm and friendly; having that one common thread in losing a family member in the line of duty

makes a strong-knit family.

Were Sekou and I close? Somewhat, but we had respect for each other. I admired him for turning his life around, capitalizing on his second chance, and representing himself well in his time as a firefighter. I am proud to be his uncle. ■



Gregg Turner



Sekou Turner



# FIRE SERVICE CORNER



## LIFE SAFETY INITIATIVE NO. 6

Develop and implement national medical and physical fitness standards that are equally applicable to all firefighters, based on the duties they are expected to perform.

By Victor Stagnaro, *Director of Fire Service Programs*



In June 13, 2012, the National Fire Protection Association unveiled a report at their annual conference listing the total number of on-duty deaths for 2011 to be at a 35-year low. The report listed the decline in firefighter fatalities in the following areas:

- Lowest number of sudden cardiac deaths
- Lowest number of road vehicle crashes
- No aircraft or watercraft crashes
- Number of deaths while involved in training activities is the lowest since 1999
- Lowest number of volunteer firefighter deaths ever
- Lowest number of career firefighter deaths (tied with 1993)
- Lowest number of deaths while responding to or returning from alarms

All the men and women who have been working with the Everyone Goes Home® program are thrilled to see the preventable deaths being reduced. It should be noted that the NFPA does not include firefighters who die in the line of duty and fall under the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) program known as "Hometown Heroes." Hometown Heroes legislation was enacted in 2003 and expanded PSOB to include firefighters who die of a heart attack or stroke within 24 hours of being involved in strenuous activity related to performing firefighting duties.

The fact is that cardiac related issues continue to be the leading cause of firefighter fatalities. Life Safety Initiative #6 stresses the need to be physically fit and to hold firefighters accountable for maintaining fitness standards. The Everyone Goes Home® program partnered with the Johns Hopkins Ciccarone Center for the Prevention of Heart Disease in 2011, to develop an inexpensive means of determining the heart health of a firefighter, and to develop strategies to treat problems that may have otherwise gone undiagnosed.

There are two main players when it comes to the role of physical fitness in the fire service. Each individual firefighter must understand that he or she is an industrial athlete. Like professional athletes, the physical demands require that every member of a crew be strong, fast, and

flexible. These are equally as important as knowing how to operate all the tools and equipment needed to put out fires and rescue citizens. The physical demands placed on the body when performing in a hazardous environment while wearing 50 pounds of equipment are unmatched in any other industry with the exception of the military. However, unlike the professional athlete, firefighters don't know when they will need to perform; therefore, they need to be prepared in an instant. There is no time for warm-ups or to gradually get the body ready. In many ways the preparation of the firefighter/industrial athlete must be calculated to ensure they have trained and dieted in such a way that their hearts can withstand the sudden changes needed to go from a full rest to climbing multiple stories within minutes.

The second main player related to a firefighter's health is the fire department or agency itself. The department must recognize that their members are industrial athletes, and they should utilize existing standards and provide the means for members to be able to meet those standards. Annual medical physicals and requirements that properly test the firefighter's physical ability are equal in importance to testing the firefighter's technical ability. Firefighters who don't meet the standards should be given an opportunity to make the needed improvement. However, there will be those who will not be able to meet the standards; and in those cases, the department must make the difficult decision and take those people out of emergency operations. Sound, unbiased policies on the physical requirements based on the duties a firefighter is expected to perform should be the deciding factor. Personalities and length of service should have no bearing on whether a firefighter stays on the line or is moved out of operations.

Much of the difficulty comes when personnel are not able to meet the standards, or when an organization looks the other way when they have a member that they know cannot perform physically. Sound policies to address the physical demands of performing the work of a firefighter and holding both individuals and organizations equally accountable to meeting them will continue to make an impact on reducing preventable firefighter fatalities. ■



# Remembering

## FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS



Mark Davis (2009-NY)

Submitted by his mother, Marsha Dickinson



Mark Davis, 25, of Cape Vincent Volunteer Fire Department in New York, was shot and killed by a patient he was helping to treat on an EMS call. Mark's family has been working to get legislation passed to make the murder of an emergency services worker a first degree murder with a penalty of 25 years to life without the possibility of parole. The bill finally became law on January 15, 2013.

Marsha Dickinson writes:

*I just wanted to tell you that Mark's Law, named for my son, Mark B. Davis, was passed 1/15/13. We are very excited about it! Mark's Law was a provision of the NY SAFE Act that Governor Cuomo signed, on what would have been Mark's 29th birthday!*

*Mark's Law was created to close a loophole in the law. If a firefighter, EMS, first responder, or volunteer is murdered in the line of duty, that murderer will not get out in three or four years.*

*Typically, a second degree murder charge—the charge given to Mark's killer—can be reduced to manslaughter or less if the murderer claimed they were temporarily insane. Now, if one murders one our guys, it is a first degree murder charge, a charge with a penalty of 25 years to life and no chance for parole.*

*A victory in our journey!*

**Has your family, department, or town done something to honor your firefighter? Let us know about it so we can include it here! Mail your write-up and photos to Jenny Woodall at the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation or by e-mail to [jwoodall@firehero.org](mailto:jwoodall@firehero.org). ■**



Mark Davis



## NO GREATER REWARD

By Firefighter Shawn Aunkst

*In memory of his brother, Firefighter Michael Alfred Aunkst (2005-NE)*

After a 360 was done  
And the chief had the proof  
Up went a brother and sister  
To put a hole in the roof

They found the mother  
Passed out but alive  
Like a bolt of lightning  
All three were outside

Awaken by our pagers  
A cloud in our heads  
The loves of our lives  
Still lying in bed

The monster was breathing  
When we got a fright  
A report of a mother  
And two children inside

After overhaul was done  
And there was no harm  
All brothers and sisters  
Headed straight to the barn

We get dressed in a hurry  
And out with the night  
They lie there and worry  
Will we be alright?

With quickness and bravery  
Packed up and inside  
My brother and sister  
Searched hard for the find

We all went home  
To the loves of our lives  
We hugged them and kissed them  
And said we are alright

We arrive on the scene  
A house full of smoke  
Wondering where is the fire  
Was it playing a joke?

They found one child  
Then they had two  
Passed child after child  
Out a window to the crew

Now some may ask  
Why we risk our own hides  
There is no greater reward  
Than saving some lives



# 2013 HAL BRUNO CHILDREN OF FALLEN



The death of a parent affects a child for the rest of his or her life. At each new developmental stage, the child must confront different aspects of that loss. At age five, the child may wonder, "Who will take care of me?" At age ten, "I wonder how my life would be different if my dad were alive." Even as children grow into adulthood, the absence of a parent continues to be felt.

Having a safe place where they can relate to other children and know they are not alone can have a profoundly positive affect on the life of children whose parent has died. 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.

Bereavement camp may sound like no fun at all. Not so! The activities at camp blend therapeutic elements and general fun camp traditions into an enjoyable and meaningful weekend experience. Each child receives one-on-one support from a specially trained volunteer "big buddy," as well as professionals trained and experienced in working with grieving children. Support and education are also available to parents who may be looking for resources to help them help their children.

Want to attend camp in 2013? Not sure if you should attend or if your child will agree to attend? We'd be happy to talk with you about camp and to put you in touch with someone who attended camp in 2012. Please contact Linda Hurley for more information at [lhurley@firehero.org](mailto:lhurley@firehero.org) or (301) 447-7693.

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## CAMP VOLUNTEER

Are you a member of the fire service? Do you love kids? Become a camp volunteer!

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) partners with Comfort Zone Camp to provide a bereavement camp for children of fallen firefighters who have been honored at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial. Campers will be between the ages of 7-17, and camp will be held at Westview on the James in Goochland, Virginia, June 7-9, 2013.

We are looking for members of the fire service to volunteer as "big buddies" and in other volunteer positions. Volunteers are required to have a background check and to attend one day of training by Comfort Zone Camp



# NO CAMPS FOR FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS

## 2013 CAMP DATES AND LOCATIONS

**Hal Bruno Camp for Children of Fallen Firefighters**  
(ages 7-17, separate program for parents)  
June 7-9, 2013 - Goochland, Virginia

*I am very HAPPY to report that my daughter has been more relaxed about talking about her dad. The camp helped relieve some of the pressure she felt about keeping her grief hidden. She has been much more open.*

-Parent, 2012 VA Camp

*At first I didn't want to go, but I loved going. I made new friends. We all bonded in special ways that even I can't explain. You should definitely give this camp a chance!*

-Camper, age 15, 2012 VA Camp

**Hal Bruno Camp for Children of Fallen Firefighters**  
(ages 4-6 with parent)  
August 8-11, 2013 - Orlando, Florida

*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



## ER OPPORTUNITY

staff. That training is scheduled for Saturday, April 20, at the BWI Four Points Sheraton, which is adjacent to the Baltimore Washington International (BWI) Airport. The Foundation will provide lodging for April 19 and reimburse actual travel expenses up to \$300 for those attending the training. The cost for the background check will also be paid by the NFFF. Volunteers are required to complete a Volunteer Application on the Comfort Zone Camp web site: [www.comfortzonecamp.org/volunteers/application](http://www.comfortzonecamp.org/volunteers/application).

If you already attended a Comfort Zone Camp volunteer training, you do not need to attend again. To register for the training and reserve your room, please contact Linda Hurley at [lhurley@firehero.org](mailto:lhurley@firehero.org) or (301) 447-7693.



# MEET THE STAFF

## CRYSTAL MORT

Crystal Mort joined the Foundation staff in 2005, as the Director of First Impressions. She now serves as a data communications assistant, providing administrative support for the Foundation's fundraising and marketing programs and special events. Crystal also assists in the Walk of Honor brick program by entering brick orders and preparing the letters and certificates for the sponsors and recipients. During the annual Memorial Weekend, she assists in the managing of the Foundation store.

Crystal lives in Fairfield, Pennsylvania, with her husband and youngest child. She has three children and two stepchildren.

*"Working at the Foundation has given me a greater respect for the men and women who put their own lives on the line every day and for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. What an honor it is to be a part of such an amazing organization, where the mission is to honor and remember America's fallen fire HEROES!"* ■



## PSOB NEWS

### DALE LONG PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS' BENEFITS IMPROVEMENTS ACT



In late 2012, Congress passed, and the President signed into law, the Department of Defense Authorization Act. As a part of the Act, the Dale Long Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvements Act was included to modify the federal Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program. The Act updates the PSOB Program in a number of ways. A few highlights include:

- The Act extends PSOB benefits to members of nonprofit rescue squads or ambulance crews in certain circumstances. The PSOB Improvements Act is named after a Vermont EMS responder, Dale Long, who was killed in a motor vehicle crash. This change applies to deaths on or after June 1, 2009.
- The Act adds vascular ruptures to the list of injuries, including heart attacks and strokes, presumed to constitute a personal injury under the Hometown Heroes Survivors' Benefits Act of 2003. This change applies to injuries sustained on or after December 15, 2003.
- The Act adds children that would be eligible for benefits, except for their age, as the final category in the beneficiary hierarchy. If a fallen public safety officer is not survived by a spouse, eligible children, a designated PSOB beneficiary or life insurance beneficiary, or parent, then the benefit may be paid

to a surviving child beyond the age of eligibility under the previous provision. This change applies to cases currently under review, and to claims submitted in the future.

For more information or questions about these changes, please contact the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program at 1-888-744-6513 or [AskPSOB@usdoj.gov](mailto:AskPSOB@usdoj.gov) ■



**BJA**  
Bureau of Justice Assistance  
U.S. Department of Justice

Enacted in 1976, the Public Safety Officers' 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.

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**



# HELPING FIREFIGHTERS DEAL WITH TRAUMA



Are mandatory debriefings following traumatic incidents always in everyone's best interest? Research and lessons learned from September 11, Charleston, and other events show the answer is no. Immediately sending in counselors has become a standard procedure, but work sponsored by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) makes it clear it's time to move forward from a "one size fits all" approach.

At an international conference on Friday, March 1, the NFFF introduced a new Behavioral Health Model that changes the way the fire service assists firefighters and others on the path to healing. It is based on the concept that no two firefighters will necessarily have the same reaction - not even to the same call.

"Years of accumulating research involving leading experts in the field of recovery from traumatic events, as well as our own work after September 11, helped us develop this new model," said Chief Ronald Siarnicki, executive director of the NFFF. "We realized not all firefighters want or need to sit in a room immediately following a distressing situation and talk about their experience. Instead, they want to know

what resources are available to them and their families and how they can access those resources when necessary."

The Behavioral Health Model reframes existing debriefing practices by recognizing how different people react to and cope with traumatic situations. The model emphasizes that people have varying stress thresholds that need to be considered when offering assistance following a traumatic event.

"This new model reminds us that a person's experiences, values and beliefs can impact how they react to any call," explained Siarnicki. "We believe this new model will give the fire service a better path to implementing a more comprehensive approach to helping our nation's firefighters and their families find assistance when and if they need it."

A new program, Curbside Manner, was also introduced during the conference. Based on the NFFF's Stress First Aid for Fire and EMS Personnel, this new course helps firefighters provide more compassionate care during an incident. It's based on more than two decades of research on how victims recover from traumatic events.

For more information about the new Behavioral Health Model go to [www.lifesafetyinitiatives.com](http://www.lifesafetyinitiatives.com).

## Coming Soon to a Table Near You: TRIBUTE WINE



Our next wine purchase can do much more than complement a meal or show others that you have discovered a fine wine. It can honor the memories of our nation's firefighters

who died in the line of duty. Every bottle sold of the new Tribute Wine from Distant Cellars, a family-owned winery in Fiddletown, California, will support the work of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

Drew Gaiser, president of the winery, is also a firefighter in Colorado. "As a firefighter and friend of one of the founders of the 9-11 Memorial Stair Climbs, I've known about the important work the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation provides for the survivors of the fallen and the entire fire service," explained Gaiser. "My family and I felt that offering this wine was a new way to help raise awareness and support the outstanding services the Foundation offers."



Drew Gaiser of Distant Cellars and Mike Ramirez of CalFire

Tribute is a blend of Zinfandel, Syrah, and Alicante Bouschet grapes that were harvested in 2010 and carefully aged for more than 24 months. Only 300 cases of this full-bodied wine were bottled on February 26 and will be available for sale in early April for \$28 per bottle on the winery's Web site, [www.distantcellars.com/nfff](http://www.distantcellars.com/nfff). Thirty percent of the sales will be donated to the NFFF.

CalFire sent an honor guard to help make the first bottling a memorable experience and to perform their last alarm ceremony in honor of the fallen. Lori Greeno, wife of fallen firefighter John Greeno (2005-CA), attended the ceremony and then worked the bottling line packaging the product.

"We were very excited about this new opportunity that Drew and his family proposed," said Chief Ronald Siarnicki, executive director of the NFFF. "This is a terrific way for both firefighters and wine enthusiasts to enjoy an excellent bottle of wine and support an important cause."

