

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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## Save The Date!

**June 19-22, 2014**

*2014 Hal Bruno Camp for Kids (ages 4-6)*

CoCoKey Hotel

Orlando, Florida

<http://firehero.org/resources/families/kids>

**August 1-3, 2014**

*2014 Hal Bruno Comfort Zone Camp for Kids  
(ages 7-17)*

Camp Wyman, Eureka, Missouri

[www.comfortzonecamp.org/calendar](http://www.comfortzonecamp.org/calendar)

**September 28, 2014**

*NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Race*

Dover International Speedway

Dover, Delaware

[www.monstermilesoffer.com/nfff](http://www.monstermilesoffer.com/nfff)

**October 10-12, 2014**

*National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend*

Emmitsburg, Maryland

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

For additional information about upcoming events, please visit [www.firehero.org](http://www.firehero.org).

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# FACING TOMORROW TOGETHER

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation  
A Newsletter for Fire Service Survivors



## Survivors Helping the NFFF from Coast to Coast

By Cathy Hedrick, NFFF Corporate Relations Specialist

### NASCAR

Our survivors were treated to an awesome day of NASCAR racing at the Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, California. Here are just a few of the survivors waiting for transportation to the race track. Going in STYLE....



(L-R) Survivors Donald Burke, Gary & Yvonne Wahlstrom, Joyce Wahlstrom, Mary Hales, Kathy Hall

The next NASCAR experience is the Kentucky Speedway on June 28th. It will be exciting; the Sprint cup Race is a race under the night lights. Then it's on to our biggest race in September, Dover International Speedway on September 28th. Watching the drivers maneuver the Monster Mile always proves exciting.

### FDIC

April found NFFF staff and survivors attending FDIC in Indianapolis. It was a very busy few days. Three fundraisers proved to be successful, with the help of our survivor volunteers. Staffing the booth were Carolyn and Jack Zeeks, Arlene and Don Zang, Jerri Johnson, and Christopher Hall. The annual Stop Drop Rock-n-Roll event was so fun and the most successful in raising donations to date. The next day, NFFF staff members and survivor volunteers helped with the 9-11 Memorial Stair Climb, held once again in the Lucas Oil Stadium. With

over 400 climbers, it was so impressive to view the event on the Jumbotron in the stadium.

### Give Back Give Away Sweepstakes

The Give Back Give Away Sweepstakes, was hosted by Pierce Manufacturing. Survivors manned the booth and encouraged conference attendees to fill out entry forms. For a small donation, attendees could have their name entered for up to six chances to win a fire truck compartment filled with up to \$10,000 worth of equipment for their fire department.

### Pennsylvania Fire Expo

May brought the annual Pennsylvania Fire Expo in Harrisburg. Once again, survivor volunteers came to assist the NFFF with our information booths.



(L-R) survivor Jeanie Cole; Scott Yuill, coordinator for the Lancaster County 9-11 Memorial Stair Climb; survivor Annette Cole

**NFFF events are held around the country and throughout the year. We may be in your neighborhood soon and may call on you to help out. For more information, contact Linda Hurley at [lhurley@firehero.org](mailto:lhurley@firehero.org) or (301) 447-7693. ■**



# FIRE SERVICE CORNER



## Life Safety Initiative No. 10

*Ensure grant programs support the implementation of safe practices and/or mandate safe practices as an eligibility requirement.*

By Victor Stagnaro, Director of Fire Service Programs



When the 16 firefighter life safety initiatives were developed in 2004, the goal of Initiative #10 was to attack the issue of firefighter fatalities on all fronts.

The Assistance to Firefighter grants were just coming into existence, and the developers of the initiative wanted to tie the ability to receive federal funds with having safety programs and adopting safe practices.

The fire grant program is now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year. Fire Act Grants was reauthorized in 2012 and provides new guidelines on how fire grant money should be distributed. Fire departments throughout the country are eligible to apply. Decisions on awarding the grants are made by a peer panel based on the merits of the application and the needs of the community. The law does require that the grants be distributed to a diverse mix of fire departments, with respect to type of department (paid, volunteer, or combination), geographic location, and type of community served (urban, suburban, or rural).

The allocated funds for Assistance to Firefighter Grants (AFG) and Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response Grants (SAFER) are at \$337 million each. Both programs are part of FEMA's State and Local Programs. The amount of grant money available for AFG and SAFER is expected to be virtually unchanged from FY2012.

It is expected that Congress will consider FY2014 and FY2015 budget appropriations for AFG and SAFER. Concerns over the federal budget deficit could impact budget levels for AFG and SAFER in the coming years. At the same time, firefighter assistance budgets will likely receive heightened scrutiny from the fire community, given the continued cutbacks that many fire departments are facing.

Though the grants office has not linked the ability to receive funds with safety practices, it has in fact funded hundreds of programs that promote firefighter safety, health and wellness. As listed on the FEMA website, the primary goal of AFG is to meet the firefighting and emergency response needs of fire departments and nonaffiliated emergency medical service organizations. Since 2001, AFG has helped firefighters and other first responders to obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training, and other resources needed to protect the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards.

The Foundation's Everyone Goes Home® program has been funded by AFG for the past nine years. Without the federal funding, the programs that have helped to promote firefighter safety could not have been realized. We owe a debt of thanks to the AFG office and their support of the *Everyone Goes Home*® program. ■



The annual Memorial Weekend will be held October 10-12, 2014, in honor of firefighters who died in the line of duty in 2013 and previous years. Each family who has a firefighter being honored this year will receive an invitation package in June with complete information about attending. Information about returning survivor participation will also be available. We hope to see you in October! ■



# NFFF Receives 4-Star Rating From Charity Navigator

The NFFF is pleased to announce that Charity Navigator, the nation's premier charity evaluator, awarded their coveted 4 out of 4-Star rating to the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation for the second consecutive year. Only 19% of organizations rated by Charity Navigator have received at least two consecutive 4-Star evaluations.

"The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation is conscientious about using our financial resources to honor the nation's fallen firefighters. We do so by providing important services such as conferences, workshops and scholarships to the survivors," said Ronald J. Siarnicki, executive director of the NFFF. "We are thrilled to receive this designation from Charity Navigators for the second year in a row."

A 4-Star rating reassures potential donors that an organization adheres to good governance and other best

practices. It shows that a charity consistently executes its mission in a fiscally responsible way.

The news media in recent years has pointed out that an increasing number of firefighter charities are under scrutiny. Siarnicki explained, "This year NFFF was contacted by reporters after line-of-duty deaths in major cities and small towns with questions on how the public can make sure their donations in honor of the fallen go to reputable



organizations." One of those tips is to check out the organization through Charity Navigator.

The NFFF has worked with several fire service charities and other organizations to ensure their fundraising meets the highest standards. For more information about the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and how to support the mission, go to [www.firehero.org](http://www.firehero.org). ■

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## Tampa 2 Summit

On the ten-year anniversary of the *Everyone Goes Home*® program, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation hosted the Tampa 2 Summit. The message was clear: while progress has been made in reducing line-of-duty deaths since the first Tampa Summit in 2004, there's still more work to do. The emphasis now is to maintain the momentum generated 10 years ago and to build a strategic plan for a safer and healthier fire service.

More than 300 fire service leaders and industry partners gathered for Tampa 2: Building for the Future to recognize the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, assess the effectiveness and implementation of the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives, and nurture the development of a new generation of fire service leaders.

NFFF Board of Directors Secretary and fire service survivor Vina Drennan and FDNY Fire Commissioner Sal Cassano delivered the keynote address. Ten breakout groups worked during the Summit and developed recommendations and action items that will most benefit the national fire service efforts to reduce firefighter line-of-duty deaths and injuries.

The NFFF selected 50 up and coming leaders in the national fire service community, who were chosen to participate in the Summit after taking part in a national

application process. They were selected based upon their involvement in the fire service community and the improvements they will bring in future years.

In addition to Vina Drennan, survivors Linda and Murray Kramer, Pam Reed, Linda Buckel, Steve Tullis, Eileen Coglianese, and Marci VanderGriend also participated in the Summit. ■

### A Survivor's Perspective on Tampa2

By Linda Buckel, *Wife of Pete Buckel (2005-MD)*

First of all, as a survivor I was honored to have been asked to attend. I really didn't know what to expect, but once I arrived I knew I was at the right place. I was with family.

What an awesome group of individuals—dedicated, committed, driven to improve the standards and to explore new means by which to implement them. We worked hard. We used every bit of our allotted time, and we still could have used more. We dealt with some difficult issues, but the professionalism and the honesty in sharing one's own personal experiences was beyond measure.

I was so proud to have been a participant in this event.



# 2014 Survivor

**T**he 2014 Survivors Conference was held in Clayton, Missouri, just outside St. Louis. There were 135 survivors in attendance, more than a quarter of whom were attending for the first time. Attendees spent time together over meals, in workshops, and at fun evening events. The only thing we might not have included is time for rest! Hopefully everyone went home with new knowledge, memories, and connections that will help lift you up on those difficult days. Thank you so much for being with us!

*I was so excited when I registered for the Survivor Conference. As the days got closer I was so nervous. As I packed I thought, "What am I doing?" I even considered not going. I'm so happy I went.*

*About a month after I lost Jeremy I started getting texts from Annette Armstrong, who also lost her son. I was able to sit face to face at this conference with her. I'm extremely grateful. As I sat in the room of 26 other mothers I realized I'm never alone. I connected with people and will forever be connected! I truly felt part of a family.*

-Jerri Johnson, Mother of Jeremy Tighe (2012-IN)

*The 2014 Fire Service Survivors Conference was an incredible experience. As a first-time attendee, I was especially thankful for the opportunities to share and learn from other survivors during daily conference sessions, while the evening activities allowed me to get to know others on a more personal level. The hospitality provided by Clayton, Missouri, as well as local fire departments, was top notch. The friendships and memories will be long-lasting. I look forward to attending again next year.*

-Lanett Stewart, Daughter of Ron Stephan (2010-IN)

*I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed and appreciated the conference in Clayton. It was so good to connect with other survivors and share our stories and other news. The crafts that were offered were so much fun. Those are things you intend to do someday and then never make time for.*

*Please pass the word to all who were so generous in making this a great conference. Clayton was such a good example of Midwestern hospitality. Thanks for all you do.*

-Darlene Mansfield, Mother of Mark Mansfield (2002-KS)



# s Conference

Our 10th annual Survivors Conference will be held in 2015 in Annapolis, Maryland. Exact dates are still pending. If you are wondering whether or not you should attend, take a few minutes to look at the pictures and read through the words of some of this year's attendees. We would love to see you there.

To the Clayton Fire Department and other St. Louis area departments and members of the fire service, thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We could not have felt more welcome in your city. You went above and beyond in showing us the love in St. Louis! ■

*Tom and I enjoyed the whole experience. Meeting so many wonderful people, and getting to share the good with the bad does help. Thanks to all.*

-Ann and Tom Sayles, Parents of John Sayles (2012-MI)

*I just want to say that the Patmon family enjoyed every minute of the conference. From the classes to the food everything was beautiful. We got to make new friends and still have plenty of old ones around. The tour of the city was great!! Eating lunch at the fire house every day was a new experience for us, but one we enjoyed.*

*The city of Clayton made us feel safe, secure, and well taken care of. We also got goody bags, prizes, and saw a show. It does not get any better than that.*

-Diane and MaryAnn Patmon,  
Wife and sister of Walter Patmon (2012-IL)

*Even though my husband Dana was killed in 1988, this was the first Survivors Conference that I have attended. When I saw this year's was in St. Louis, I knew it was only about a four hour drive and that I could do that. I asked my daughter, Kellie, to come with me.*

*I wasn't sure this was something I really thought I could do, but I stepped out of my comfort zone and said what the heck. I am SO very glad that I did. From the minute we stepped into the hotel until we left, we were treated like royalty. The Clayton Fire Department went above and beyond even my wildest expectations. What a wonderful, stress free environment. I was able to finally meet up with SO many people that were a phone call or Facebook post. After ALL these years, I was finally able to give Linda Hurley that hug that I've owed her for many, many years! This Conference was a Godsend, for me, and I highly encourage everyone to go to at least one. From the bottom of my heart; I thank the NFFF for always being there for us.*

*If you're thinking, "Should I do this?" step out of your comfort zone and go for it. You will be glad that you did.*

-Anne Schoolman, Wife of Dana Andrew Schoolman (1988-IL)



# Returning to a Table Near You: **Tribute Red Wine Blend**

## Limited Second Vintage Honoring Fallen Firefighters on Sale May 1

**T**he feedback and reviews were tremendous and the support heartening. The sale of 2010 Tribute Red Wine Blend from Distant Cellars Winery in support of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation was a great success. If you missed out last year, you won't want to let it happen again.

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and Distant Cellars are proud to announce the release of the 2011 Tribute Red Wine Blend. Only 500 cases of this full bodied red wine blend were made. It went on sale for \$28 a bottle on May 1, 2014, on the winery's website, [www.distantcellars.com](http://www.distantcellars.com).

"We could not be more excited as a family to release our second vintage of Tribute. Last year's release was an amazing way for me to share my family's hard work with my extended firefighter family," explained Drew Gaiser. Not only is Gaiser the president of the winery, he's also a Colorado firefighter. "One of the greatest parts of last year's release was hearing from survivors how the NFFF

had helped after their loved ones were lost. Those stories and memories fired us up and were our motivation as we created the 2011 Tribute."

The 2011 Tribute Red Wine is a blend of Zinfandel, Grenache, Mourvèdre, and Alicante Bouschet, carefully aged over 30 months. Thirty percent of all sales will be donated to the NFFF. Distant Cellars is a small family owned winery located in Amador County, California. This second vintage follows the great success of the 2010 vintage that raised over \$25,000 for the Foundation. Last year Tribute was sold across the country to both firefighters and their supporters and quickly sold out.

"We are so pleased to partner again with Distant Cellars Winery for this unique and very popular opportunity, and we're looking forward to building upon the success of last year," said Chief Ronald Siarnicki, executive director of the NFFF. "The Gaiser family's commitment to the Foundation and our mission is deeply appreciated."

For more information about Distant Cellars or to order the 2011 Tribute Red Wine Blend, go to [www.distantcellars.com](http://www.distantcellars.com). ■



## Vehicle Donation Program

**T**he National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, located in Emmitsburg, Maryland. It is registered as a corporation in the State of Maryland. The Foundation receives funding through private donations from caring individuals, organizations, corporations, and foundations.

Congress created the NFFF to lead a nationwide effort to honor America's fallen firefighters. Since 1992, the nonprofit Foundation has developed and expanded programs that fulfill that mandate. Our mission is to honor and remember America's fallen fire heroes and to provide resources to assist their survivors in rebuilding their lives.

Have an old car taking up space in your driveway? Donate it to the NFFF!

To donate, go to: <http://firehero-cardonations.org>. ■

## Walk of Honor Update

**T**he next order for engraved bricks will be submitted at the beginning of June. It takes roughly two months for the engraver to fill and deliver the order, which will be installed at the end of September. If you want to have a brick placed into the Walk of Honor prior to this year's NFFF Memorial Weekend, the time to order is NOW. Brick forms can be found on our website <http://firehero.org>, or contact Judi Whitlow at [jwhitlow@firehero.org](mailto:jwhitlow@firehero.org) or 301-447-7913. ■



# To the Cold and Wet (or Warm and Dry) the NFFF Says Thanks!

**H**ere's how the Cold Water Challenge works: You receive this challenge from a friend or coworker. Stay dry and donate \$100 to the charity of your choice, or get doused with a bucket of cold water and donate \$10. Either way, the organization benefits.

The *24-Hour Cold Water Challenge* has captured the creative minds and generous hearts of many firefighters, survivors and NFFF supporters. To those who are taking the plunge—literally or figuratively—and picking the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation as your charity, we thank you.

In the week before this newsletter went to press, we received nearly 250 donations in amounts of \$10 or \$100, and more are coming in every day. Your donation

will directly help the survivors of fallen firefighters.

As you know, safety is one of the key missions of the Foundation. We urge you to keep that in mind if you accept a challenge.

You can fulfill your challenge obligation by going to [www.donate.firehero.org](http://www.donate.firehero.org) and clicking on the Cold Water Challenge box. You can then show others that you've fulfilled your promise by sharing it on Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn. You can also send a check to National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, P.O. Drawer 498, Emmitsburg, MD 21727 and earmark it as Cold Water Challenge.

Best of luck to all of those who are being "called-out" by a friend or colleague. If you post a video on social media, feel free to tag the Foundation. Have fun, and please, be safe! ■

## Meet the Staff: Cathy Hedrick

### Corporate Relations Specialist

**C**athy began volunteering during the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Memorial Weekend after her firefighter son, Kenny, was killed in the line of duty and then honored in 1993. She joined the Foundation staff in 2004 after a 30-year career in nursing. She brings a survivor's perspective to the Foundation's programs. Cathy is the Corporate Relations Specialist and serves as the Foundation's liaison to its Corporate Advisory Committee. She coordinates special events and assists the Executive Director with fundraising and marketing. Cathy has worked with the Taking Care of Our Own® and Courage to be Safe® training programs, and has made presentations at local, state, and national fire service meetings.

Cathy's husband Les is a retired volunteer fire chief who has been dedicated to the volunteer fire service for 44 years. He shares the family's passion for serving the fire service by promoting the missions of the NFFF through advocating prevention of line-of-duty deaths and helping to provide support to other survivors.



They have a daughter, Sherri Lynn, and two busy grandsons who enjoy drag racing, lacrosse, and wrestling.

*Our family is blessed and honored to be a part of such a unique organization. We struggled to find answers to the WHY question after the death of our son. The NFFF held our hand and showed us how to survive together, how to hold on to each other through a most difficult and tragic challenge. We are grateful to have benefitted from the guiding hands of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. ■*

## Upcoming NFFF Fundraising Events



Want to learn more about how to support NFFF fundraising efforts? Two of the main fundraising events are Golf Tournaments and Stair Climbs, held around the country and throughout the year.

For more information about how to get involved, visit:

<http://golf.firehero.org>  
[www.9-11stairclimb.com](http://www.9-11stairclimb.com)

