

FACING TOMORROW TOGETHER

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
A Newsletter for Fire Service Survivors

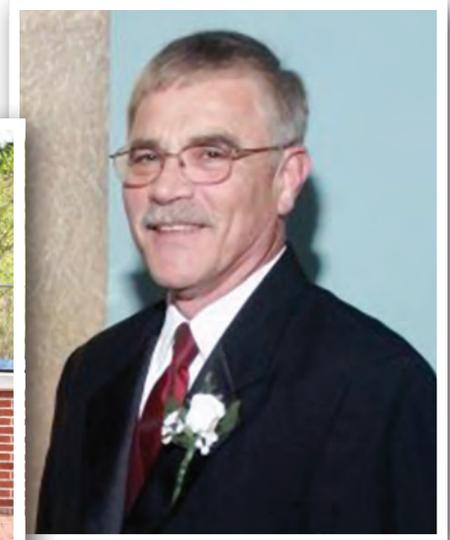


SURVIVORS IN THE NEWS



Congratulations to **Jim Daughetee**, father of Shane Daughetee (2007-TN), who was recently named an honorary member of the board of directors of the Tennessee Fallen Firefighters Memorial. The Memorial was dedicated in 2011, and the board is making an effort to include fire service survivors in its activities. In Jim's words: *I feel very honored to be selected to this position.*

Tennessee
Fallen Firefighters
Memorial



Jim Daughetee



Jennifer Cormican



Jennifer Cormican, daughter of Bruce Cormican (1995-WI), was recently featured in the employee newsletter for Southwest Airlines talking about her volunteer work with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. Hers was the lead story and went out to the 70,000 plus Southwest employees! Jenn said: *It's a pretty big deal to be involved in volunteer work for Southwest, as it is highly encouraged, rewarded, and now profiled!*

Jenn works as a Southwest Air operations agent at Denver International Airport. Her volunteer work for the NFFF has included public speaking, fundraising, writing remembrance cards, and working during the annual Memorial Weekend. ■



Bruce Cormican



FIRE SERVICE CORNER



LIFE SAFETY INITIATIVE No. 4

EMPOWER ALL FIREFIGHTERS TO STOP UNSAFE PRACTICES.

By Victor Stagnaro, *Director of Fire Service Programs*



When I was first hired as a firefighter it was my job to keep coffee in the coffee pot, do what I was told, and keep my mouth shut. The daily activities focused on knowing my job, knowing where

every piece of equipment was stored on the fire apparatus, and keeping the engine and ladder truck clean. Those were just a few of the things that a good rookie did. I was fortunate to work for officers that would allow me to ask lots of questions and, though they were aggressive firefighters, understood that they shouldered the responsibility for my well-being on an emergency incident. Some of my colleagues were not as fortunate, and their ability to question the officers' decisions related to safety were quickly answered with disapproval.

Over the years the fire service has learned that the ability to question unsafe practices brings value and enhances safety. Twenty years ago firefighters—in particular recruit firefighters—were told it was someone else's job to do the thinking. Today, every firefighter is empowered to understand their situational awareness and make assessments about their safety and the safety of their fellow crew members. All too often firefighters know or have a feeling about a situation but fail to

say anything. They may decide not to speak because they don't want to be ridiculed, or they may believe that the officer must know what he/she is doing; therefore, it must be okay.

The point of initiative #4 is to encourage every firefighter to, at the very least, speak up and be heard. It is very possible, that in some situations the officer is not aware of something or misses a piece of information that will cause them to make a different decision. So, it is okay to speak up and be heard. Even if the officer or crew decides not to change their tactic, they do so with a better understanding of what they are facing.

There are two main components to empowering firefighters to stop unsafe actions. The first is situational awareness and to take responsibility by operating safely as they have been taught. The second is to give all firefighters the ability to bring up real issues related to their safety without having to fear being ridiculed.

Being a good rookie is an important and cherished tradition of the fire service, a part of our culture that we should never lose. But in addition to keeping a fresh pot of coffee in the coffee maker, being a rookie should include speaking up when you see something that may endanger yourself or your crew.

VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT DOCUMENTATION



Approximately 75% of America's firefighters serve on volunteer fire departments. When a firefighter fatality occurs, information needed as part of the Public Safety Officers'

Benefits (PSOB) claim packet is documentation regarding the department's volunteer status. This documentation is required whether the volunteer fire department is a nonprofit/chartered corporation or a unit of local government that uses volunteers. Many departments have been established for decades, and when this documentation is needed to support the PSOB claim, it can be challenging to obtain, causing additional stress for the volunteers who are already suffering from the loss of one of their own and potentially delaying the review of the PSOB benefits for the survivors.

As part of its U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance grant, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) has launched a project to contact volunteer fire departments and make them aware of this required documentation. Departments will be asked to forward a copy of this documentation to NFFF; in turn, NFFF will compile the information and make it available to the PSOB Office, to reference should tragedy strike.

Two contractors, Danny Jarboe and Marjean Meyer, are dedicated to this important project. If your department is contacted, your assistance in supplying this documentation will be greatly appreciated. Please send information as outlined below to the attention of Linda Hurley at the Foundation's address or by e-mail to: lhurley@firehero.org.

If VFD is a nonprofit/chartered corporation:

1. A statement on letterhead, signed by an elected official such as a mayor, county commissioner, etc. and also notarized, which states:
"The (insert name of VFD) is legally organized and is authorized by the (insert name of government agency) to act on its behalf by providing fire services, as its primary function, to the community of (insert name of jurisdiction)."
1. A certified copy of the charter or minutes of the government agency's meeting establishing the VFD as that government agency's VFD.

If VFD is a unit of government which utilizes volunteers:

1. A statement on letterhead, signed by an elected official and also notarized, which states:
"The (insert name of VFD) is a unit of (insert level of government), government, using volunteer firefighters." ■



Remembering

FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS



Remembering Thomas J. Foley (2001-NY) Submitted by his mother, Patricia Foley

My son, Firefighter Thomas J. Foley, lost his life on September 11, 2001. I was honored to see the Walk of Honor update in your newsletter.

My daughter, Joanne Foley Gross, has recently completed a documentary on Tommy's life titled "Legacy of a Young Hero." There are so many wonderful memories included in this beautiful and inspiring documentary.



Images from Thomas J. Foley website

My family and I thank you for everything you have done for us and continue to do for all our heroes.

For more information about Thomas J. Foley and "Legacy of a Young Hero," go to www.FireFighterThomasJFoley.com



Remembering Heath Van Handel (2009-WI) Submitted by his wife, Jenny Van Handel

The Heath Van Handel Memorial Forest was recently dedicated in memory of Heath Van Handel, who lost his life in an aircraft accident on April 8, 2009. At the time of the accident Heath was performing the duties of fire Air Attack Pilot, helping direct firefighters on the ground in the suppression of a wildland fire.

Heath Van Handel, 36, grew up near the forest and was living his dream of working as a conservation pilot for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Heath was devoted to his wife, Jenny, and his sons, Mathew and Brett.

Heath had dedicated his life and career to the Wisconsin DNR as a conservation pilot and died while serving to protect the people of Wisconsin. Heath loved being outside with nature, looking at it from above, and caring for it. Nature held a special place in Heath's heart, and woodlands such as these brought him great peace. ■



Matt, Brett, and Jenny Van Handel

FINANCIAL PLANNING ASSISTANCE

There is now available a nuts to bolts financial plan for any surviving family member, free of charge! This is both a web-based and paper-based planning tool, offered by a professional financial planner who volunteers with the Foundation. Many of you know Mark Youngs, a

financial planner who has worked with families through the Foundation for the last 11 years. Mark now has the capability to work with you over the internet and the phone. For more information please contact Mark Youngs at:

Youngs Financial Planning & Wealth Management
Youngs@YoungsFinancial.com
(443) 837-9240 ■



2012 SURVIVOR



The 7th annual Fire Service Survivors Conference was held February 11-17 in sunny Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, much to the delight of those from colder

climates. It was the largest conference to date, with about 130 survivors participating. The theme for this year's conference was "We're All in the Same Boat," a nod to the nautical locale and the shared experience of survivors.

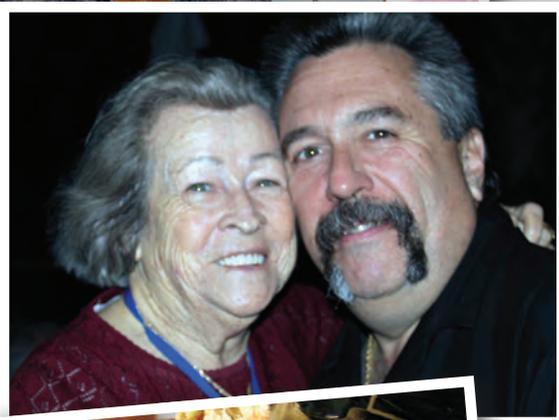
Survivors attended a variety of workshops including Widowhood, Dating & Remarriage, Dealing with Difficult People, and Photography. They spent time getting to know one another in small groups, during meals and on outings to a butterfly garden and an alligator swamp. They danced in the moonlight at a poolside beach party. Tears and laughter and stories were shared, new memories and friends were made, and hopefully everyone returned home knowing that they are truly never alone.

Thanks to the many individuals and organizations that helped make this conference possible through funding, logistics, transportation, and sponsorship of events.

**U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance
Motorola, Inc.**

**Anne Arundel County (Maryland) Fire Department
Anne Arundel County (Maryland) Sheriff's Office
Broward County Council of Professional Firefighters
Broward County Fire Chiefs' Association
Broward Sheriff's Office Department of Fire Rescue &
Emergency Services
(Chief Neal de Jesus & Chief Mike Cassano)
City of Hallandale Beach Department of Fire Rescue
City of Hollywood Fire Rescue Department
City of Plantation Fire Department
City of Sunrise**

(Bruce Moeller, City Manager)



RS CONFERENCE

Thank You to the NFFF once again for an awesome job on the Survivors Conference!!! You are our inspiration to keep putting one foot in front of the other.

No matter how far out we are, we can always offer support and comfort to others. Sometimes for those who are still new to the journey it's a blessing just to see someone who has survived for 5, 10, or 20 years...it reassures them that they can, too!

This was my first conference. I had a wonderful week. I met a new fire service family, and everyone is just great. Everything was just perfect from the pick up to the departure.

What a blessing this week has been. As survivors we come together to honor our firefighters and to support one another. The bond within this family only grows stronger each time we gather.

My time here in Florida has ended; however, the memories, the laughter and the blessings will forever be with me!! With the help of my survivor family this week, I realize how blessed we were, how blessed we are, and the blessings our future can be.



- Clearwater Fire and Rescue
- Coral Springs Fire Rescue
- Davie Fire Rescue Department
- Fort Lauderdale Fire-Rescue
(Chief Jeffrey Justinak and Chief Robert Hoecherl)
- Mike and Bernadine Gilrain
- Greater Broward Firefighters Charities
- Honor Guards from Sunrise, Coral Springs, Hollywood, Plantation, BSO, & Lauderhill
- Margate Fire Department
- Metro-Broward Local 3080
- Miramar Fire Rescue Department
- Plantation Fire Department
- Pompano Beach Fire Rescue
- Seminole Tribe Fire Rescue
- Sunrise Fire Rescue Department
(Chief Norm Rynning, Ret. and Chief Thomas DiBernardo)
- Sunrise Sports and Entertainment
- Tamarac Fire Rescue



FIRE SERVICE CORNER



SURVIVOR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL ASSISTANCE STATE TEAMS (LAST)

By **John Proels**, *National Coordinator, LAST Program*

The Local Assistance State Team (LAST) Program is a collaborative effort between the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance and the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF). The Foundation realized that, to best assist families and departments who had lost a firefighter in the line of duty, they needed to have trained personnel on the ground and available to help when requested within six hours of a death. This could only be accomplished by developing a team of trained responders in each state who could be deployed immediately upon notification of a line-of-duty death. The NFFF began training personnel in these functions in October 2006 and has continued this training across the country since that time. Funds from the Department of Defense, Bureau of Justice Assistance grant make this vital program possible. No NFFF donation funds are used to perform any of the LAST functions.

When a line-of-duty death is reported to the NFFF, the Local Assistance State Team coordinator (CAST) in that state is notified and immediately contacts the chief of the affected department to offer assistance. That assistance can include operational support to ensure the continuance of service to the community, support to the family of the fallen firefighter, planning and coordination of funeral activities, assistance in obtaining behavioral health services for family and department members, and the preparation of local, state and federal benefit claims. While these teams may perform many important functions, their primary responsibility is to assist with the preparation and submission of the Public Safety Officers' Benefits claim. The LAST will only assist if requested and will operate in a transparent manner behind the scenes to help the department accomplish necessary tasks.

LAST members include personnel from all areas of public safety, as well as survivors of line-of-duty deaths and volunteers from all lines of work. They are passionate about helping families and departments who have suffered the loss of a firefighter in the line of duty. Whenever possible, the CAST is a fire chief who has experienced a line-of-duty death and has in-depth knowledge of the state and its fire service activities. The CAST will designate backups to each position on the team to ensure that there is always someone available should there be a line-of-duty death in their state. There are specialty members on each team such as an honor guard commander, chaplain, survivor, logistics specialist and benefit specialist. All team members operate under the direction of the state CAST in assisting the family and department. In large states, there may be multiple teams in different areas in order to shorten response times. Team deployment can be as few as one member to a complete activation of the team, depending on the assistance requested.

There is no clear cut role for survivors as members of a LAST. All members operate as part of the team, filling whatever role is needed to deliver the requested service. There are natural roles for some survivors in assisting with requests from the family and with the preparation of benefits packages, but it is the responsibility of the CAST to decide who would be best at these individual functions. The CAST may determine that a department member who already has a relationship with the family may be the best person to assist the family with these tasks.

Surviving families have expressed that the first several months after a firefighter dies are often a blur. The policy of the LAST Program is not to have a survivor immediately introduced to the newly bereaved family. In training, team members are told that the CAST is to contact the NFFF before putting a survivor in touch with a new family or adding a survivor to their team. However, in some cases, survivors have taken it upon themselves to reach out to the new families—often without the knowledge of LAST or the NFFF. The NFFF is in the process of developing training for survivors who wish to assist with peer support. All survivors who are officially providing peer support on behalf of the NFFF or who wish to participate with LAST will be required to complete this training.

When the NFFF receives a request to provide peer support for a surviving family member, a survivor who has similar life experiences is selected to make the contact. Matches are made based on multiple factors, including family situation, type of service, circumstances of the death, age of children in the family, etc. A spouse who had young children at the time of the loss might be utilized if the requesting family had young children; parents of a young son who died from a heart attack might be matched with the same. Linda Hurley, Director of Survivor Programs, with the assistance of Jenny Woodall and Vickie Taylor, makes these decisions and provides direction to the CAST for handling these requests.

Survivor participation in the Local Assistance State Team Program has been very successful and has added a dimension to our teams. State team coordinators appreciate having this valuable resource and will utilize everyone's talents and abilities when they are responding to the requests and needs of families and departments of firefighters lost in the line of duty. If you have questions about the NFFF Local Assistance State Team Program, please contact:

John Proels
National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
2130 Priest Bridge Dr., Suite 6
Crofton, MD 21114
(301) 712-7201 cell
jproels@firehero.org ■



KIDS CAMP 2012



The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation is pleased to announce a partnership with Comfort Zone Camp to provide a weekend bereavement camp for children

and stepchildren, ages 7-17, of fallen firefighters who have been honored at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The camp will be free of charge, and the Foundation will help with travel expenses for campers and parents/guardians. The Foundation will also provide lodging for parents near the camp site and local transportation. The camp is made possible by a donation from State Farm, a bequest from the family of Hal Bruno, and a Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance grant.

Structured camp activities will provide an opportunity for children from across the country to meet with others in

their age group with similar experiences and to learn skills to cope with their loss. Comfort Zone Camp provides a therapeutic component in combination with a dynamic camp setting, allowing campers to process their grief in a fun and safe environment.

What? Hal Bruno Camp for Children of Fallen Firefighters

Who? Children and stepchildren, ages 7-17, of firefighters honored at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial in Emmitsburg, Maryland

Where? Camp Hanover in Mechanicsville, Virginia

When? Friday-Sunday, June 8-10, 2012.

The deadline to register for camp is April 30, 2012.

For more information on Comfort Zone Camp, or to register, go to www.ComfortZoneCamp.org. If you have questions, contact Linda Hurley at lhurley@firehero.org or (301) 447-7693. ■

FALLEN HEROES TRIBUTES AT www.firehero.org



Did you know that each firefighter honored at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial has a special tribute page on the NFFF website?

If your loved one was honored in Emmitsburg in the past five years, you probably sent in a bio and photo for the Remembrance Book that is created each year during the Memorial Weekend. Those tribute pages are also posted on each firefighter's page in the Fallen Heroes section at www.firehero.org.

For those who have not yet done so, we invite you to send in a bio and photo for your firefighter's page in this online Roll of Honor. This is another way to help keep the stories alive and to tell people about the lives of the heroes honored in Emmitsburg. We are currently trying to fill in the missing information and would love to have a tribute page for each firefighter who has been honored.

Not sure if a tribute has been posted for your firefighter?

Please visit www.firehero.org. Go to the Fallen Heroes section to search for your firefighter by last name.

Want to send in a tribute?

If no tribute is posted, please send a bio and photo of your firefighter to include on the site.

No access to a computer or no technical skills?

No problem! You can mail us a neatly typed or written bio and a photograph, and we will post it for you.

Not sure what to write?

We can send you some examples of tributes others have

written to use as a starting point. We also invite you to read the profiles on the online Roll of Honor to learn about the lives of these brave men and women from all walks of the American fire service.

Send bios, photos, or inquiries by e-mail to: webteam@firehero.org or by mail to the Foundation's address, Attn: Web Team. ■

MEET THE STAFF

ROSE HOEPFL

Rose Hoepfl (HEFF-ul) joined the Foundation staff in July 2011 and currently serves as an accountant in the business office. She has an A.A. degree in applied communications and a B.A. in accounting.

Rose was born and raised in northwest Pennsylvania and relocated to Gettysburg last year. She is greatly enjoying the area's milder climate and her responsibilities at the Foundation. In her free time she enjoys reading, sewing, cross-stitch and anything Civil War. She and her husband have a son and four grandchildren. ■



SAVE THE DATE!

April 1, 2012

2012-2013 Scholarship Applications must be postmarked and mailed
www.firehero.org

April 19, 2012

Stop, Drop, Rock & Roll at FDIC
Indianapolis, IN
www.fdic.com/special-events.html

April 26, 2012

CFSI Fire Caucus Dinner
Washington, DC
www.cfsi.org

April 28, 2012

Fire Service Volunteer Training for Kids Camp
Baltimore, MD
Contact: lhurley@firehero.org



June 8-10, 2012

Kids Camp in Memory of Hal Bruno
Camp Hanover
Mechanicsville, VA
Deadline for registration is April 30
www.comfortzonecamps.org

For additional information on upcoming events, such as 9-11 Stair Climbs and Golf Tournaments in your area, please visit www.firehero.org.

June 30, 2012

NASCAR Sprint Cup
Event to benefit NFFF
Kentucky Speedway, Sparta, KY

September 30, 2012

NASCAR Sprint Cup
Event to benefit NFFF
Dover International Speedway, DE

October 5-7, 2012

31th Annual National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend
Emmitsburg, Maryland
weekend.firehero.org

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

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