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# National Fallen Firefighters Foundation ANNUAL REPORT



2013

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**Mission Statement** – *To honor and remember America's fallen fire heroes and to provide resources to assist their survivors in rebuilding their lives and work within the Fire Service Community to reduce firefighter deaths.*

Since its creation by Congress in 1992, the non-profit National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) has developed many programs to fulfill its Congressional mandate. Federal grants and donations from individuals, organizations, corporations, and foundations fund the



Foundation's programs.

## Survivor Programs

### The Fire Service Survivors Network

A core group of family members of fallen firefighters make up the **Fire Service Survivors Network**. These dedicated individuals volunteer to assist newly bereaved families and help the Foundation with projects throughout the year and during the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend. There are now a total of 457 Network members from 44 states and the District of Columbia. Members of the Fire Service Survivors Network assisted by:

- **Contacting newly bereaved families and offering emotional support.**

Survivors of 2012 and 2013 fallen firefighters were carefully matched with Network members. These matches took into account similarities between the newly-bereaved survivor and Network member. For example, widows with young children were matched with widows from previous years whose children were young when their firefighter

died. This outreach provided peer-to-peer support for 46 families of firefighters who died in 2012 and 74 families of firefighters who died in 2013. This contact is a key element in the healing process.

- **Sending Remembrance cards to all survivors on the date of their firefighters' deaths.**

Personal messages from Network members let other survivors know that they were remembered on the anniversary date of their firefighter's death. In 2013, 143 Network members sent 3,413 cards.

- **Supporting activities of the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend.**

Sewing black bands for fire service badges, helping with family registration, greeting families being honored, making luminary bags, and other Family Day activities. More than 200 family members returned to assist, provide comfort, and network with families of fallen firefighters being honored.

- **Assisting with fundraising activities.**

Survivors assist the Foundation at golf tournaments, stair climbs, NASCAR races, and trade shows.

### Hal Bruno Camp for Children of Fallen Firefighters

The **Hal Bruno Camp for Children of Fallen Firefighters** is a weekend bereavement camp that provides children an opportunity to network with other children and gain tools to help them cope with the loss of their firefighter parent. The Virginia camp in June for ages 7-17 had 31 children attend. In August, 7 children attended the camp in Florida for ages 4-6.







## Scholarships

Many children tell us that their fallen firefighter stressed the importance of getting an education, and our scholarships help them reach that goal. Since 1997, the NFFF's scholarship program has given spouses, life partners, children and stepchildren of firefighters honored at the National Memorial the opportunity to pursue their personal, educational and career goals.

With a very generous donation from the Motorola Foundation, the Foundation awarded \$213,468 for the 2013-14 academic years. Our partner, ICMA-RC, awarded \$15,000 to 13 recipients and Global Health & Safety awarded four \$2,000 scholarships for a total of \$8,000. The National Association of State Fire Marshals awarded \$1,000 scholarships to 10 recipients. The Foundation and its partners awarded \$246,468.

- There were 82 scholarship recipients:
  - 78 children, 2 stepchildren, and 2 spouses
- Of the 82 scholarship recipients:
  - 55 were previous recipients
  - 27 were new recipients
- Scholarships were awarded to 17 survivors of firefighters killed on 9/11.
- Ages of scholarship recipients range from 18 to 53.
- Scholarship recipients come from 29 different states
- New York had the greatest number of recipients with 26
- Illinois had the second greatest number with 6 recipients
- The scholarship recipients include:
  - 27 survivors of volunteer firefighters
  - 55 survivors of career firefighters

Recipients are attending colleges in 35 different states and are preparing for careers ranging from Aerospace Engineering to Nursing. Three recipients are enrolled in a Fire Science program.



## Grief Support Resources for Survivors

In May, staff met with family members of the 10 firefighters who died on April 17 in the fertilizer plant explosion in West, Texas. The Foundation staffed an office in West for several months to provide assistance to the families and the departments. In September, staff met with family members of the 19 firefighters who died on June 30 in the Yarnell Hills Fire in Prescott, Arizona. Assistance with filing for the Public Safety Officers' Benefits and resources on dealing with grief were provided to families.

A Lending Library of books dealing with the subject of grief and recovery is available for survivors. Brochures on coping with grief are also provided free of charge.

Provided 250 grief brochures to survivors in 7 states—Alabama, Arizona, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas.

Staff frequently received requests for grief resources or counseling from families and coworkers. These requests were fulfilled either by information available from the Foundation or by finding counseling services in the area where the families live.



## Eighth Fire Service Survivors Conference

The 8th annual Fire Service Survivors Conference took place April 14-17 in Phoenix, Arizona. The conference was held in conjunction with the Foundation's Local Assistance State Team (LAST) training, and an annual meeting of the Everyone Goes Home® State Advocates. It was beneficial for both survivors and fire service members to meet and learn about the Foundation's programs. There were 145 survivors and 80 members of the fire service in attendance.

Survivors gained knowledge and life skills in workshops which included: *What the Grinch Taught Me About Love, Stress First Aid, Peer Support, Estate Planning, Technology 101, Grief & Depression, Budgeting & Money Management, Communication Issues in Bereaved Families, Home Safety & Maintenance, Self Defense, and Tai Chi.*

Survivors tell us that being able to relax and network with others who know what it is like when a loved one dies in the line of duty is one of the most beneficial experiences of the conference.

## Research and Disseminate Information on Survivor Benefits

A comprehensive Federal, state, county, and local benefits research project for the families of fallen firefighters was completed. The updated information was posted in the State Benefits section of the Foundation's website: [www.FireHero.org](http://www.FireHero.org).

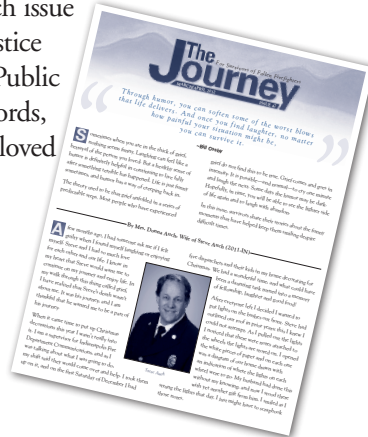
## Publications and Resources for Survivors

Six issues of *The Journey*, a publication of articles written by survivors, were published and mailed exclusively to survivors. Each issue included a section authored by Department of Justice staff, "Did You Know," with information on the Public Safety Officers' Benefits program. In their own words, survivors wrote about issues they faced after their loved ones died. Survivors contributed articles on:

- Young Widowhood
- Journey through Grief
- Favorite Memories
- Helpers
- You Are Not Alone
- Choices

Each issue of the Foundation's quarterly newsletter, *Facing Tomorrow Together*, was sent to more than 6,000 survivors and members of the fire service. Articles contained information on:

- Volunteering
- Honoring Fallen Firefighters
- Leadership Award
- Tragedy in West, Texas
- Golf Tournaments
- Farewell to Friends
- Survivors Conference
- Fundraising Events
- Bells Across America
- Kids Camps
- Life Safety Initiative 7
- Scholarships
- Be a Hero, Save a Hero



## NFFF Board of Directors

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## Fire Service Programs

All fire programs can be connected to one or several of the *16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives*. The Initiatives were developed in 2004 at a first-ever fire service summit to focus attention on reducing line-of-duty deaths and firefighter injuries. In 2014, the Foundation will once again revisit the initiatives by hosting a second Tampa Summit. We expect that second summit will be equally as historic and help to develop strategies to further reduce injuries and preventable deaths. The 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives are the core of our *Everyone Goes Home*® (EGH) program.

### Everyone Goes Home Advocates

The *Everyone Goes Home Advocates* serve as the “boots on the ground” of the EGH Program. The goal of the Advocate program is to develop local and regional plans and imbed the *16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives* into state and local curriculums as well as the local training programs of each fire department.

### Be a Hero Save a Hero

Firefighter Life Safety Initiative 14, Provide Public Education with more resources and champion it as a critical fire and life safety program, and Firefighter Life Safety Initiative 15, Strengthen Advocacy for the enforcement of codes and the installation of home fire sprinklers have moved to the forefront of the *Everyone Goes Home*® program. With the assistance of a corporate sponsor, the Foundation has developed its Community Risk Reduction program around the slogan “Be a Hero, Save a Hero”. Community Risk Reduction materials have been placed on a new web page dedicated to the *Be a Hero Save a Hero* campaign. The program is aimed at encouraging the public to adopt safe fire practices, and fire departments can use it as their slogan to reduce the occurrences of fire.



### Local Assistance State Team (LAST)

In 2013, the *Local Assistance State Teams (LAST)* faced some of its greatest challenges since its inception in 2006. This past year, LAST teams across the country provided various levels of assistance for 104 reported firefighter fatalities. In that same timeframe, they also supported fellow public-safety agencies with aiding the families and departments of 16 EMS fatalities and 9 law enforcement deaths. The major challenge for the year came from two incidents where a total of 29 firefighters were killed. These two incidents required the largest LAST deployments since the Sofa Super Store Fire in Charleston, South Carolina, that took the lives of nine members of the Charleston Fire Department in 2007.

In April, an explosion at a fertilizer factory in West, Texas, claimed the lives of ten first responders. Along with the Texas LAST team, three additional teams from across the country responded to help, and the NFFF maintained a physical presence in the town for more than three months to assist the families and the departments with starting to rebuild their lives.

In June, 19 wildland firefighters died fighting the Yarnell Hill fire near Prescott, Arizona. The Arizona LAST deployed immediately and before completion of the nineteen funerals a total of eight different LAST teams were also called in to assist with this major operation. Several of the teams were deployed to Prescott to work directly with the Arizona LAST to coordinate the funerals being held in the immediate vicinity of Prescott. Other teams assisted by receiving the remains of the firefighters who were being buried in other states, and also to help the families where there was not a home department. This major deployment was a success and demonstrated the value of the LAST program. It has evolved into a functional first response for assisting families and departments when firefighters die in the line of duty.







In addition to the incidents described above, LAST assisted in the preparation and submission of 76 PSOB claims this year. In all, this was a difficult year that has proved the worth and benefits to the families and departments of the Local Assistance State Team Program.

### Taking Care of Our Own® Training

A fire department does not know when it will have a line-of-duty death or serious injury. Does it have a plan in place? Are personnel records current? Does the department know how to make timely and proper notification to the survivors? Fire chiefs and survivors tell us that most fire departments are not prepared for a line-of-duty death.

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, through a Department of Justice grant, offers a training program to help fire departments prepare for the worst--a line-of-duty death or serious injury. Fire service personnel and families who have lost a firefighter in the line of duty helped develop this one-day course called *Taking Care of Our Own®* (TCOOO). It covers pre-incident planning, survivor notification, family and co-worker support, benefits, and resources available to the families. TCOOO provides senior fire officers specific information and valuable insights.

In 2013, 61 senior fire officers attended trainings in Wisconsin, Washington, and Idaho. As a result, they are better prepared to help the families and coworkers should a line-of-duty death happen in their department.

### Online Training Programs

The Fire Hero Learning Network continues to serve as the main source of the *Everyone Goes Home®* training programs. *Courage to be Safe*, the course that outlines the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives is now online and continues to be the most popular course. We have also completed on online *Leadership, Accountability, Culture and Knowledge (LACK)* course. We now have four online courses with several more in the works.

Both *Courage to Be Safe* and *LACK* have been accepted on the National Fire Academy's "Approved Course" list which allows the students of these classes to receive National Fire Academy certificates and permits use of USFA grant funds to present these classes. We worked very closely with the state fire training agencies in this endeavor, and they have proven to be a great partner to the *Everyone Goes Home®* Program.

The newest training program, *Leadership So Everyone Goes Home* has been piloted in several venues throughout the year. The 4-hour course uses four case studies to discuss how leadership can incorporate the 16 firefighter life safety initiatives to prevent line-of-duty deaths and injuries. A thirty-minute companion video will be rolled out in early 2014 to compliment this program. The learning network can be accessed at [www.FireHeroLearningNetwork.com](http://www.FireHeroLearningNetwork.com).

### Behavioral Health – Life Safety Initiative 13 – Suicide Prevention

The Foundation's *Stress First Aid (SFA)* program has been completed and is being delivered on a regular basis. Several departments have adopted the SFA program and instituted it within their departments. South Carolina serves as a national model, having incorporated the program within the State. They have combined their efforts with Provident Insurance to deliver behavioral health assistance to firefighters and their families across the State.

In 2014, the *Everyone Goes Home®* program held a fire service summit to focus attention on the issue of firefighter suicide. A guide on suicide prevention was developed for Fire Chiefs and clinicians to use. We plan to continue to study the issue of firefighter suicide in the coming year.





## Rules of Engagement Checklist

A group of operational firefighters and officers met at the Oregon State Public Safety Training Academy. Checklists were developed for engine company officers, truck company officers, heavy rescue squad officers, special operations and command officers. The goal of the project was to develop a customizable checklist that can be downloaded off of our website. The customizable checklist resides on the Firehero Learning Network.

## Seal of Excellence Recipient

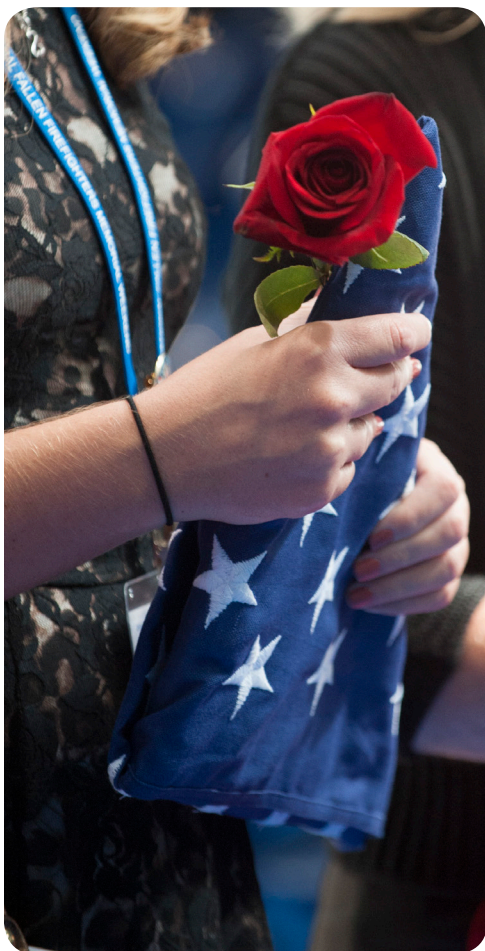
The Rhode Island Fire Chiefs Association (RIFCA) was awarded the Seal of Excellence. When the Rhode Island legislators passed a bill exempting emergency vehicle drivers from wearing seatbelts, RIFCA stood up for safety. The association sent the Governor a clear message that the state's fire chiefs believe those in public safety should be setting an example for the citizens. In addition, the chiefs told the governor the bill would make driving an emergency vehicle much more dangerous for firefighters, EMS workers, and police. RIFCA's efforts convinced the governor to veto the bill. In recognition of their work, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation presented the association with the Seal of Excellence Award.

## The National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend

The National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend on October 4-6 honored 73 firefighters who died in the line of duty during 2012 and 8 who died in previous years. Despite the Federal Government shutdown and being required to relocate the events, the Weekend was a fitting tribute to the fallen firefighters and a memorable event for their families. During the weekend, families:

- Visited the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial
- Made rubbings of their loved ones' names
- Made luminaries for their loved ones for use in the Candlelight Service
- Attended small group sessions facilitated by behavioral health specialists with expertise in dealing with grief. Family members were able to share their experiences and were given information and resources to help them deal with their loss. A special session for chiefs enabled them to meet with other chiefs who experienced a line-of-duty death in their department.
- Were honored by more than 300 Red Helmet motorcyclists who rode to the family hotel and placed a wreath in honor of the fallen firefighters
- Attended the Saturday night Candlelight Service that honored their loved ones
- Attended the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service on Sunday where tribute was paid to their loved ones. Each family received a badge, rose, and American flag flown over the U.S. Capitol and the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial. More than 6,000 attended.

Both the Candlelight Service and the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service were televised and streamed live over the internet and were viewed nationwide and around the world.



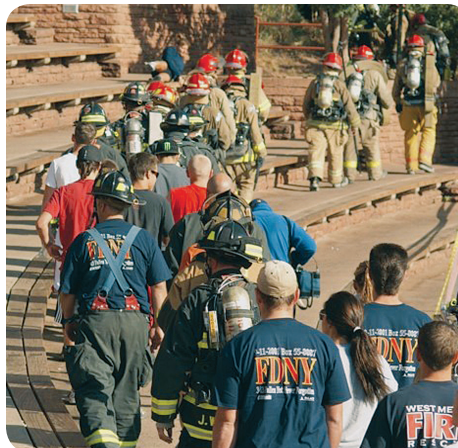




## Fundraising Activities

### 9-11 Stairclimbs

The 9-11 Stairclimbs continue to honor fallen firefighters and assist survivors as well as serve to highlight the fact that firefighters must train as industrial athletes to serve their communities. In 2013, there were 37 stairclimbs across the country, and the Foundation sponsored stairclimbs at all the major trade shows. Firefighters are traveling to participate in climbs, and there have been cases where firefighters have gone on regimented fitness programs and diets to be able to complete the 110-story climb. Very special thanks go out to each stairclimb coordinator and the Stairclimb Steering Committee who make these great events happen every year.



### National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Golf Tournaments

This marks 11 years of Foundation Golf Tournaments across the country. In 2013, there were 32 golf tournaments from Maryland to California. Several tournaments have incorporated day-long training events, dinners with survivors as keynote speakers and other Foundation-related functions to augment their tournaments. Our thanks go out to the volunteers who turn these Golf Tournaments into a way to assist our survivors.



### Public Awareness

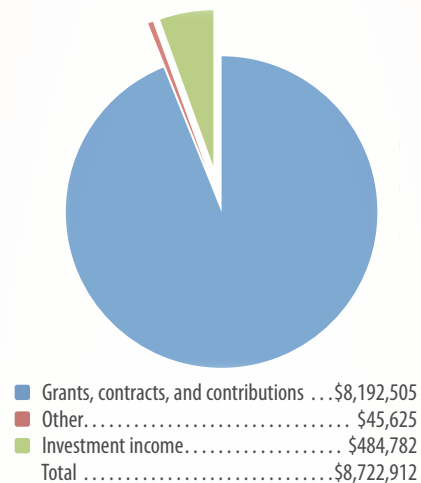
The Foundation's Web site was enhanced by including more resources and information for survivors. The site includes a special Family Programs section, online forms to request information and peer support, specialized grief materials, and links to other resources and organizations.

There were 29,222,598 page views of the [FireHero.org](http://FireHero.org) site. There were 1,117,551 page views of the [EveryoneGoesHome.com](http://EveryoneGoesHome.com) site.

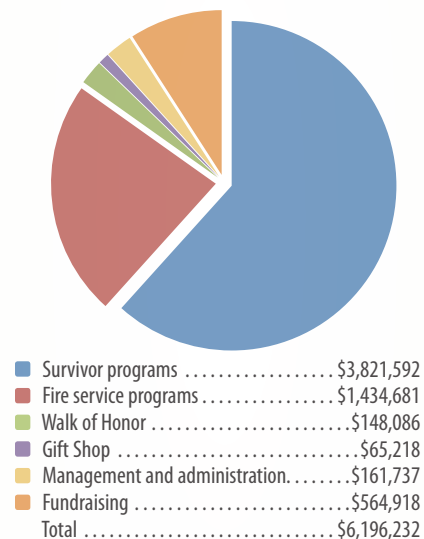
A "widget" on the web site featuring 2012 fallen firefighters changed each day to feature a new firefighter. It was accessed and downloaded by numerous fire service organizations and publications. After the 2013 Memorial Weekend, the widget was revised to show information on firefighters honored in previous years.

## Financial Information

### 2013 Revenue and Support



### 2013 Program Expenses



### 2013 Net Assets

