

Scholarships *continued from page 3*

They would like a few family survivors to partner with the Engine Company 5 Foundation in forming a survivors' scholarship that would be awarded to qualified applicants with the NFFF/Sarbanes Scholarship, without the expense and hassle of forming a not-for-profit tax-deductible organization. A survivors' scholarship fund could actively raise funds and serve as a committee to help select scholarship applicants provided by the NFFF. Scholarships can be awarded under the name of a family survivor's scholarship or a specific memorial scholarship that honors a fallen firefighter. With the 501c3 status of the Engine Company 5 Foundation, any funds donated will be tax deductible.



All expenses such as accounting, IRS reporting, legal, or other administrative costs would be kept to a minimum and shared with the Engine Company 5 Foundation/Steel Family Foundation to maximize the annual award amounts.

If you have questions or would like to discuss this further, please contact John Steel at (317) 797-3789 or engco5fdn@yahoo.com.

2018 Survivor Events

April 8-10

Fire Hero Family Wellness Conference

Blue Ash, Ohio

June 9-15

Outward Bound

Appalachian Trail, Pennsylvania

June 29-July 1

Hal Bruno Camp for Children of Fallen Firefighters

Johnsonburg, New Jersey

August 2-4

Young Adults Retreat

Warrenton, Virginia

October 5-7

National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend

Emmitsburg, Maryland



BJA
Bureau of Justice Assistance

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.

Toll-free: 1-888-744-6513

We want to hear from you...



This publication features pieces written by and for fire hero family members about their experiences after the death of their firefighters in the line of duty. The articles you write go out across the country to large cities and small towns, where they are received by fellow fire hero survivors. For some, this publication may be their only contact with other families of fallen

firefighters. What words of wisdom and encouragement do you have to offer?

jwoodall@firehero.org (preferred) or
National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
Attn: Jenny Woodall
P.O. Drawer 498
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

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The Journey

For Survivors of Fallen Firefighters

ISSUE 81 ~ FEBRUARY 2018

« *The only cure for grief is action.* »

~ George Henry Lewes

There are as many ways to grieve as there are people who are grieving. Each of us is a unique individual, and we bring our own experience, temperament, family history, culture, beliefs, and quirks with us into our grief experience.

Some people need to express their emotions freely, to cry and talk and ask the tough questions. Others find creative release through art, music, dance, and writing. Some people seek out a community of other grievers, finding comfort in shared understanding of loss.

Another path that works for many people is channeling grief into direct action. We see this in the fire service community in the form of monuments and memorials, scholarships, annual fundraising events, stair climbs in honor of fallen firefighters. Grief can make us feel powerless, and taking action is a way to regain some control and a sense of purpose.

In past issues of *The Journey* we have featured articles about two family members who have restored firetrucks

as memorials to fallen firefighters. One wife created a wellness event dedicated to firefighter cardiac health after her husband died of a heart attack in the line of duty. Another family holds an annual blood drive in their firefighter's honor. All these are examples of living in the present, working to serve and improve the lives of people who are still living, while honoring the memory of the fallen firefighter you love. Taking action can also be a powerful way to help save ourselves. It means we are still alive and that we have something to contribute.

During the recent NFFF Parents and Siblings Retreat, several of the fathers in attendance talked about a service project they participated in during the 2014 Survivors Conference in Clayton, Missouri, and how much it meant to them to be able to give something to the community hosting the conference. At their request, a men's service project will be part of the program for the 2018 Wellness Conference in Blue Ash, Ohio. It will be another opportunity for people to use their hands and hearts, to be of service, to put love into action.

By Cerie Strain, Mother of Kenneth Strain (1999-NC)

Bill and I are the parents of a fallen firefighter. Our son, Kenneth Strain, died in the line of duty in 1999. We began volunteering with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation right away. We knew that the support and love from the Foundation was something we needed to share with others.

During the Memorial Weekend, we volunteered to assist in packing the family bags to be given to the families of the firefighters being honored. I noticed that most of the items we were placing in the bags were made in or representing the state of Maryland. I began to think about our own

state memorial, which is held the first weekend in May in Raleigh, North Carolina. I decided I needed to create that same type of family survivor bag to distribute at our memorial services.

When we returned home, I immediately approached a few large local businesses and shared my idea of creating our own family survivor bag. I was amazed at their immediate response to assist. I am an artist and crafter, and I knew my fellow crafters would want to participate. I was not disappointed. We were thrilled to receive

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Cerie Strain *continued from page 1*

special gifts that were created specifically for each family.

The small gifts poured in from those I had approached—from bottles of soda to crafts to household and comfort items. The bag was filled, and now we are receiving so many gifts we have expanded the bags from 2 to 3 per family. After the memorial service, I make sure to send thank you notes to all who have participated in donating items for the honored family. And I look forward to them sharing with me again next year.



Items donated for the North Carolina family bags

I would like to encourage all of you to help create a family survivor bag of items from your state to be distributed at your own state memorial. You will be amazed at the response you receive from the businesses and corporations in your state. All it takes is a short call or a visit. Tell your story and just ask them to share. Please remember, you can't be told yes or no unless you ask. Have fun creating those family survivor bags and spreading the fellowship of survivors in your state.

Want to help with similar efforts within your state? Most states have established memorials to fallen firefighters or fallen public safety officers. Many hold annual memorial services to honor fallen firefighters who have died in that state during the previous year. To find more information about your state, please see the list at <https://www.firehero.org/fallen-firefighters/state-firefighter-memorials>.

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Opportunities to Help Other Fire Hero Families

2018 Memorial Weekend Volunteers

Many family members return to the Memorial Weekend in the years after their firefighter was honored. It's a time for returning families to spend creating and renewing bonds with one another. It's also a chance for them to give back—or give forward—to the families of firefighters being honored that year.

Returning families are involved in all Memorial Weekend events. They greet new families at registration, staff activities such as the luminary bags and plaque rubbings, and hand out programs before the Candlelight and Memorial Services. And each year, families whose firefighters are being honored tell us how meaningful it is to them to be greeted so warmly by people who have walked in their shoes and who know what it's like when a loved one dies in the line of duty.

The Memorial Weekend is about the families and friends of the firefighters being honored. Everyone



else—staff, volunteers, members of the fire service—works together to support them. As with any large event involving multiple activities and groups of people, things sometimes get hectic behind the scenes. As a Memorial Weekend volunteer, you have to be ready to roll with that. Are you flexible, quick thinking, cheerful even under pressure, dependable, and able to work collaboratively with other people? If so, you might really enjoy being part of this amazing team of hardworking, dedicated volunteers! You'll be tired at the end of the day, but hopefully the best kind of tired after a job well done, knowing you made a difference.

To volunteer during the 2018 Memorial Weekend, please contact Ashley Whitmore at awhitmore@firehero.org or (301) 447-1365.



Sticker Brigade

Each year during the annual Memorial Weekend, families decorate luminary bags in honor of their firefighters to be used during the Saturday evening Candlelight Service. It's always touching to see family members working together to find just the right stickers to decorate their bag in a way that reflects their firefighter's life and personality. Many of the stickers are donated by families whose firefighters have been honored in previous years, and we so appreciate these generous and thoughtful donations. Last year one of these "sticker collectors" told us she reads through the bios of firefighters who will be honored that year to find clues as to what kind of stickers to buy. Now that is attention to detail!



If you are a crafter or you just enjoy bargain hunting, please keep an eye out for stickers that might work well for the luminaries. People have found all kinds of stickers related to firefighting, EMS, military service, hobbies, outdoor pursuits, food, sports, pets, etc. In particular, there is a request for anything related to wildland firefighting and for relationship words like son, daddy, sister, etc. Stickers are accepted at any time throughout the year.

Please send to:

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
Attention: Ashley Whitmore
PO Drawer 498
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

Scholarships and Educational Assistance

It's that time of year again! If you will be attending college or other post-secondary education in the 2018-2019 academic year, consider applying for a National Fallen Firefighters Foundation scholarship. The NFFF offers financial assistance for post-secondary education and training to spouses, life partners, children, and stepchildren of firefighters honored at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial. For complete information or to download an application packet, go to:

<https://www.firehero.org/resources/family-resources/programs/scholarships>

Our website lists information about other sources of financial assistance for line-of-duty death survivors, including the Public Safety Officers' Educational Assistance Program and educational benefits available in each state.

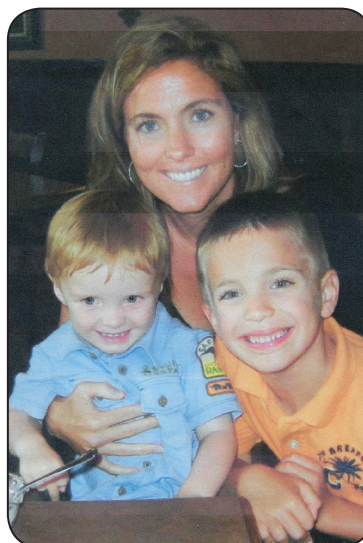
Columbia Southern University (CSU)

Interested in an online degree? CSU is proud to honor those who have served their communities and is offering one scholarship to the spouse or life partner of a fallen firefighter who has been honored at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial. This scholarship will cover up to \$13,500, the equivalent to 60 hours, in one online degree

program with CSU. The scholarship award will be applied directly to the recipient's tuition for up to three years or until the completion of the selected online degree program.

Engine Company 5 Foundation

The Engine Company 5 Foundation/Steel Family Charitable Foundation, a 501c3 not-for-profit corporation, has been formed to raise money and award funds for scholarships for the children of our fallen fire heroes. Over the years the Steel Family Foundation has helped the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation by supporting its family programs, and recently the Engine Company 5 Foundation was formed to raise funds and award scholarships through the NFFF.



Every year the NFFF awards nearly 75 qualified applicants scholarships to help pay for post-secondary education. For the last several years, The Engine Company 5 Foundation has awarded nine of the scholarship recipients additional funds through the Terry Manning and David Edwards Memorial Scholarships. They would like to increase that number and assist more children of fallen firefighters who wish to pursue a degree.

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