

DECEMBER 2006

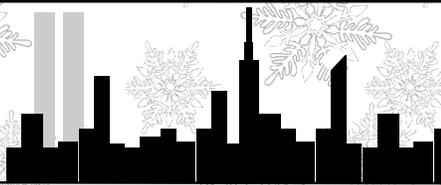
VIEW
P O I N T

FROM



metroTech

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NYC FIRE DEPARTMENT



The Bravest Santas

Firefighters deliver toys to Katrina victims in Mississippi

Twenty-three active and retired firefighters donned matching t-shirts and bright red Santa hats on December 6, as they delivered more than 8,000 toys to children in Mississippi who were affected by Hurricane Katrina.

“It’s a real shot in the arm to their spirits,” said retired Lieutenant Tom O’Connor. “We wanted to send a message to the Gulf states that they haven’t been forgotten. That we know what they’re suffering through.”

Through the support of the 9/11 Families for Katrina Relief Foundation, the group loaded four Penske trucks with toys donated by New York City residents, corporations and local unions. They also filled three additional trucks with juice boxes, cookies and snacks to be handed out with the toys.

The group then drove the trucks more than 1,300 miles south to the Civic Action Complex in Moss Point, Mississippi, where they were greeted with enthusiastic waves and cheers by children from Head Start.

“All of the hours in the truck were really worth it when we saw the kids,” said Lieutenant O’Connor. “And it’s the perfect fit, since firefighters are all kids at heart.”



(Above) Twenty-three retired and active firefighters drove seven trucks filled with more than 8,000 toys, food and supplies to Mississippi on behalf of the 9/11 Families for Katrina Relief Foundation.

(Below) FDNY "Santas" make their way to Moss Point, Mississippi.

This is the second year firefighters have made the journey to the hurricane ravaged area.

Last year, soon after the disaster, they made three trips to Biloxi, Mississippi, driving more than 20 truckloads of food and supplies to the area.

“It’s the least we can do,” said retired Firefighter Gary Moore. “So many people were there for us during 9/11 and we want to give back to the people of the Gulf Coast and say thanks. We understand disaster. We understand tragedy.”



IN THIS ISSUE

- Commissioner’s Message Page 2
- Honorary Firefighter Named Page 3
- Rescues Pages 4-7
- Charity Basketball Game Page 8



Lauding the Courage, Accomplishments of all FDNY Members

As this year draws to a close, I commend all of our firefighters, EMS members, fire marshals and civilians for the tremendous work you do each and every day. I am proud of the enormous strides you have made to improve this Department and better protect New Yorkers than ever before. We have made tremendous advancements in 2006, and I am certain that your dedication and commitment will continue to strengthen this Department in the years to come.

Yet as we look back on the year, we cannot fail to remember that this summer came to a tragic end as two of our Bravest made the Supreme Sacrifice following a third-alarm fire in the Bronx on August 27. Lieutenant Howard Carpluk Jr. and Probationary Firefighter Michael Reilly displayed the courage and heroism to which all of our members aspire, and we continue to mourn their passing. Our hearts and prayers stay with their families in this season and throughout the year.

Through the sacrifice and hard work of our uniformed workforce, the people of this great City have never been safer. With increased training and more advanced equipment, our members are better prepared than ever before. Over the past five years, civilian fire fatalities have dropped to historic lows – numbers not seen since statistics were first recorded early in the last century. EMS members are getting to life-threatening emergencies faster than ever before. And this comes as the FDNY responds to a record-high number of emergency calls.

But our work is never done. Our members are always looking for ways to improve operations, and, in 2006, we unveiled several major technological advancements.

In April, we implemented the new Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) system, which uses global-positioning technology to track the real-time movements of every ambulance in the 911 system. This has greatly enhanced our dispatching capabilities and improved average citywide response times by 24 seconds. Soon, fire apparatus will be monitored in similar fashion.

Yet AVL is just one part of the new technology in our new Fire Department Operations Center (FDOC). Located at Headquarters, the state-of-the-art, \$17 million command center monitors FDNY operations 24 hours, seven days a week and can serve as a remote command post for the Chief of Department or his designee in the event of a large-scale emergency or multiple incidents across the City.

The capabilities of the new FDOC – from retrieving the history of any building in the City in seconds to monitoring live video feeds from helicopters – is truly groundbreaking and already has proven to be an effective response tool during major emergencies.

The FDOC's technology proved useful during the Manhattan plane crash on October 11. The FDOC staff monitored live heli-

copter video feeds and studied aerial photographs of the fire building and its exposures. The information was shared with those on scene, enabling our members to do their job in a safer and more efficient manner. Yet what was most impressive that day were the firefighters who charged into the high-rise building without yet knowing the cause of the disaster. It was a frightening scene that evoked all too many memories of September 11, 2001. All of the responders are to be commended for their courageous efforts.

This was just one of the many ways our members displayed their skills and training across the City this year. For example, Firefighter Donald Casey was off-duty and headed to a doctor's appointment in September when he pulled a trapped driver from his burning tractor-trailer just moments before it exploded on the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. Also in September, on the day before he was promoted to lieutenant, Firefighter Robert Roderka performed two high-angle rescues within three hours in Manhattan. After the 10-alarm fire in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, on May 2, our fire marshals developed the evidence that found the culprit who ignited the largest blaze in the City in more than a decade. And just last month, Paramedic Patrick Worms helped resuscitate a 13-year-old Bronx girl on his first day to work after graduating from the intense paramedic training program.

As for the future, nearly 30,000 candidates have filed applications for the upcoming firefighter exam, and more than 40 percent of those are minorities. In an effort to diversify the ranks to better reflect the people we serve, the Department launched a successful 10-month campaign this year to recruit qualified applicants of diverse backgrounds. The unprecedented effort by our Recruitment and Diversity Unit produced this extraordinary response, and I am eager to welcome the best and brightest recruits to the ranks of the greatest fire department in the world.

Thank you all for contributing to the Department's success in 2006. Your dedication to public service will help to make 2007 our most successful yet. I wish you and your family a happy, healthy holiday and best wishes in the coming year. Stay safe and may God bless you all.



Commissioner's
Message

Nicholas Scoppa

Sidewalk Sinkhole

Firefighters rescue woman who fell into the sidewalk

It was not the night to go shopping. Fay Drod was taking grocery bags out of her car when the sidewalk outside her Brooklyn home suddenly collapsed. Drod fell several feet into a deep hole on East 55th Street in Old Mill Basin and was left trapped until New York's Bravest arrived.

"She was in a sitting position when we got there, with a slab of concrete on her waist," said Lieutenant Kevin McCabe of Ladder 170.

Firefighter Jim McNulty immediately jumped into the hole with the woman to ensure her safety.

He and other members of Ladder 170 lifted the concrete block off her legs and

helped stabilize her before removing her from the hole.

"I pulled her towards me, then I got a good grip on her and said, 'Let's go,'" he recounted. "She was definitely in a lot of pain."

EMS members transported her to Kings County Hospital.

"It was a team effort," said Lieutenant McCabe. "And I'm glad she's doing well."



Firefighters work to free Fay Drod, who was trapped when the sidewalk gave way and she fell several feet into a hole.

Photo courtesy of Todd Maisel, NY Daily News

The Heart of a Firefighter

9/11 Hero Welles Crowther named Honorary Firefighter

On September 11, Welles Crowther "the man in the red bandanna" demonstrated the bravery and selflessness of an FDNY firefighter when he saved the lives of as many as 18 workers inside the World Trade Center.

Five years after his tragic death, Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta and Chief of Department Salvatore Cassano posthumously named him Honorary Firefighter in an emotional ceremony at FDNY Headquarters on December 15.

"We would have been extraordinarily lucky to have him as a firefighter," said Commissioner Scoppetta. "He had everything to live for and his parents can take comfort in the fact - if it's possible to take comfort under these circumstances - that he died while helping others."

The 24-year-old worked on the 104th floor of the South Tower in September 2001, as an equities trader for Sandler O'Neill & Partners.

After the airplanes struck the towers on the morning of September 11, he raced up and down the steps helping lead - and sometimes carry - workers to safety. He was recognized by many of the strangers he saved for his red bandanna, which he tied across his nose and mouth to protect

against the intense smoke and dust.

"He sacrificed so much for people he didn't know," Chief Cassano said. "He had the genes of a New York City firefighter."

Since the age of 16, Welles Crowther served as a volunteer firefighter in his hometown of Upper Nyack.

His parents, Jefferson and Allison, said he always dreamed of making firefighting a career.

In the summer of 2001, Jefferson Crowther said his son discussed aspirations of becoming an FDNY firefighter. He remembered questioned the young man's decision, reminding him that the career change would mean a huge pay cut.

Yet Allison Crowther noted, "He was a man of action. You couldn't hold him back when he set his mind to something."

Following their son's death, they said they found a partially completed FDNY



(Above) Commissioner Scoppetta and Chief Cassano join Welles Crowther's family, including his parents, Jefferson and Allison (holding frame), as they posthumously name him Honorary Firefighter.

(Right) Welles Crowther, who saved as many as 18 workers before he died at the World Trade Center.

firefighter application in his apartment.

"To Welles, firefighting was a career, that was a life," Jefferson Crowther said. "I think he didn't immediately apply because he didn't want to disappoint me. But now he is Welles Crowther, FDNY member, and that is definitely not a disappointment to me."

Two Days, Three Saves

Paramedics who recently graduated from the Academy resuscitate victims of cardiac arrest

When paramedics graduated from the EMS Academy on November 27, they had no idea how quickly their new advanced skills would be put to the test.

Less than 72 hours after celebrating their graduation, three members of the class helped resuscitate victims of cardiac arrest.

"These incredible rescues prove that even when a situation looks bleak, our members will step up and provide exemplary care," said Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta. "The FDNY's paramedics and EMTs are the best in the business. They are at their best when circumstances are at their worst."

Paramedics Patrick Worms and Kevin Mazuzan

Patrick Worms was just six hours into his first tour as a paramedic on November 29 when he and his new partner, Paramedic Kevin Mazuzan, got called to Middle School 301 in the Bronx.

An eighth-grade girl had gone into cardiac arrest.

When they arrived, the two members of Station 14 ran to the science lab, where school officials were performing CPR on the girl. She was not responsive, not breathing and had no pulse.

Yet even though Paramedic Worms had never before performed advanced life support on a child, he said his instincts kicked into gear.

"Time just stopped for us," said Paramedic Worms, who was an EMT for two years before his promotion. "That's when all your training and practice become critical."



Paramedic Patrick Worms (second from left) tells how he helped save a 13-year-old girl who went into cardiac arrest at Middle School 301 with his partner, Paramedic Kevin Mazuzan (second from right). They were joined by EMS Medical Director Bradley Kaufman and School Principal Benjamin Basile.

He hooked up an intravenous line to administer drugs to the victim and Paramedic Mazuzan inserted a tube to open her air passage.

When the heart monitor displayed signs of electrical activity, Paramedic Worms said, "It was extremely satisfying. We both sighed in relief."

His partner concurred. "The moment we got her pulse back was absolutely beautiful," Mazuzan said.

The patient was transported to Lincoln Hospital for continued treatment.

"There is no such thing as a slow day for EMS in the South Bronx, and to my credit, I had a new partner who was competent in his skills," said Paramedic Mazuzan.

Paramedics Chris Higgins and Jeannette Otero

When Paramedics Chris Higgins and Jeannette Otero of EMS Station 19 got the call that a young asthmatic woman collapsed in her Bronx apartment on November 30, they sprang into action.

The duo rushed to the scene on Davidson Avenue and ran to the fourth floor, where they found members of Engine Company 43 performing CPR on the victim.

Paramedic Otero graduated from the Academy just three days before, but she

was already required to put her new Advanced Life Support skills to the test.

"I just stayed focused and worked with my partner," she said.

The victim, a petite 23-year-old, had collapsed and slipped off the couch onto the floor of her living room. She was unconscious and had no cardiac rhythm when the EMS team arrived.

"It looked bleak," Paramedic Higgins said. "Coming into this sort of situation is never a good thing."

The two paramedics worked together to administer medicine, insert a breathing tube and consult with EMS Telemetry Control Physicians by phone.

Within minutes the two were able to restore her heart rhythm.

"Right away, her vital signs stabilized and she had a strong pulse," said Paramedic Otero, who worked for 13 years as an EMT before her promotion.

The victim was transported to Bronx Lebanon Hospital for continued respiratory treatment.

As they looked back on the harrowing day, Paramedic Higgins only had words of praise for his partner: "Jean didn't hesitate at all. She showed the composure of a seasoned veteran."

Paramedics Edwin Hockstein and Cesar Ramirez

A 49-year-old woman in the South Bronx called 9-1-1 on November 30 saying she was vomiting blood.

Then the phone went silent.

Dispatchers immediately sent for assistance, and fire and EMS units arrived within minutes.

Firefighters made a forcible entry to her apartment on Sheraton Avenue as paramedics and EMTs rushed through

the door.

When Paramedics Edwin Hockstein and Cesar Ramirez located the victim, she was on the floor in the hallway near her bedroom.

"She still had the phone in her hand," said Paramedic Ramirez, who had completed the Advanced Life Support program at the Academy after working for three years as an EMT.

The two paramedics then prepared to administer advanced care as a team of EMTs began giving CPR.

"She had no pulse that we could detect," Paramedic Hockstein said. "It didn't look good."

Within seconds, Paramedic Hockstein administered medicine through an intravenous tube and Paramedic

Ramirez suctioned her airways to aid with her ventilation.

"We managed to restore a decent pulse rather quickly," Paramedic Ramirez said.

The patient was transported to Bronx Lebanon Hospital to continue her recovery.

As she was being moved, Paramedic Ramirez said he was happy to see the victim showing signs of regaining neurological control.

"I never expected that my transition from an EMT to a paramedic would happen this quickly," he said, noting that this was the first call that required him to put his new skills into practice. "But the outcome was pretty great."



EMTs get sworn in as paramedics during a combined graduation/promotions ceremony on November 27. Just a few days later, three of the new paramedics saved three victims of cardiac arrest in the Bronx.

Up the River without a Paddle

Marine 1 rescues kayaker out of the Hudson River

When a 32-year-old Hoboken man was kayaking in the Hudson River on November 21, he ran into a small problem -- he dropped his paddle.

The high winds and strong current capsized his boat, and he became pinned between pilings near Morton Street in Manhattan, just north of Pier 40.

After struggling for 30 minutes in the

chilly waters before help was called, his core temperature dropped to 93 degrees.

Luckily, Marine 1 was on its way.

Yet as the team of firefighters on the fireboat, Marine 1 Alpha, reached the victim, the rescue operation hit a snag.

"The victim was determined not to leave his kayak," said Firefighter Timothy Moynihan. "He didn't want to let

go."

Yet Lieutenant Michael Finer and the rest of the crew were determined to rescue the man.

"We positioned the boat, got a line on him and pulled him to safety," said Firefighter Moynihan.

EMS transported the victim to St. Vincent's Hospital for treatment.



Fireboat Marine 1 Alpha makes its way through the Hudson River. The boat is 27 feet long, has the ability to travel up to 45 miles per hour and can transport 16 people. Although it is equipped for fire suppression, its design makes the boat ideal for water rescues.

Rapid Rescue

Quick thinking by Marine 1 saves an elderly man in the Hudson

When Marine 1 responded to the aid of a man in the chilly Hudson River on November 20, they knew they didn't have much time.

The crew sped to the aid of a 73-year-old man, who was bobbing and struggling to stay afloat near the ventilator tower of the Holland Tunnel.

"He was flailing around and ready to go under," said Firefighter Wall.

Lieutenant James Zodkovic said members quickly and carefully worked to

maneuver the fireboat Marine 1 Alpha through the fast-moving currents and jagged pilings in the area. Then Firefighter Wall attached himself to the safety reel and lowered himself to the victim.

While the officer handled communications onboard, Firefighter Wall grabbed hold of the frightened man and the crew hoisted him onto the boat.

It is not clear why or how long the man was in the water.

"It was most definitely a team effort,"

said Lieutenant Zodkovic. "We got there quickly and everything fell into place."

Even though their boat became snared in the underwater pilings as they made their way back to the pier, the crew was able to dislodge it quickly and proceed to shore.

When they returned to their base on Bloomfield Street, North River, they were met by an EMS crew at the dock who transported the man to St. Vincent's Hospital.

A Rescue and a Message in Safety

Woman closes the door, helps firefighters save her and her daughter

Nabila Nazli told rescuers she always knew she would be brave when something bad happened, but FDNY members are also praising her for being smart.

She closed her bedroom door as she rushed to the window to help her young children escape a second-floor apartment fire in Gravesend, Brooklyn on November 17.

"She was totally trapped," said Firefighter Bob Treiland of Ladder 166. "Every room was totally engulfed in flames. Shutting that door saved them."

Before fire units arrived on scene, four

of Nazli's children were saved as she dropped each one to neighbors waiting below.

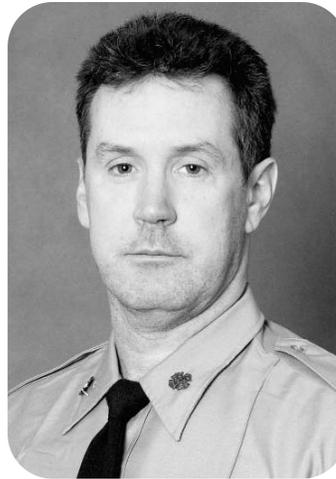
Yet the thick smoke quickly overcame Nazli and her five-year-old daughter, and they collapsed just feet from the window.

Firefighter Treiland said he rushed to climb a portable ladder and immediately located the two victims. He

carried the small girl to safety as his colleagues rescued her mother.

"She was face down and totally limp,"

"She was face down and totally limp. She was totally lifeless. It's amazing she survived."



Firefighter Robert Treiland

said the 13-year veteran of the Department. "She was totally lifeless. It's amazing she survived."

The early morning fire moved quickly through the wood frame building, which took firefighters about an hour to get under control.

The victims were transported to area hospitals and are expected to make a full recovery. Nine

firefighters also suffered minor injuries in the fire, which fire marshals deemed accidental.

A Terrifying Dive

Marine One-Alpha rescues a woman in the Hudson River

It was like a scene from the movies.

Marine One-Alpha responded to the call of a woman in the icy waters of the Hudson River on December 4, just off 34th Street in Manhattan.

When they spotted the victim, she was about 75 yards away from their boat, struggling to keep her head above water.

Yet as they started their approach, she was swept away by the current.

The crew followed the victim through the choppy waters, but could only get within 20 feet of her due to underwater obstructions and the danger posed by the



Firefighter Augie Tufano

boat's propellers.

"I was determined to get her before she went down for good," said Firefighter Augie Tufano, a 21-year-veteran. "It was freezing outside, so we were all concerned."

Firefighter Tufano wasted no time and began to swim toward the female, as strong waves tossed him into underwater pilings.

"Once he reached her, she attempted to climb up on him due to her severe state of panic, pushing him under the water, making it difficult and dangerous for him to gain control of her," Lieutenant Thomas Piambino said.

"I was determined to get her before she went down for good."

When Firefighter Tufano finally got a rescue hold on the woman, he was able to quickly pull her to safety.

"[Firefighter Tufano] rescued a victim that surely would have drowned

that afternoon," said Lieutenant Piambino. "Our crew is skillful and ready for anything. She is really lucky."

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EMS Members Play to Give



Members of EMS Stations 39 and 44, and Battalion 38 join physicians from Brookdale University Hospital Medical Center for a charity basketball game on November 25, benefiting the Marines Reserves' Toys for Tots Program. Photo courtesy of EMT Doug Stewart, EMS Station 39

Members of EMS Division 3 played a friendly game of hoops with physicians from Brookdale University Hospital Medical Center November 25 to raise funds for the Marine Reserves' Toys for Tots Program.

An overflowing crowd of Department members and their families filled the stands at Our Lady of Miracles Church in Brooklyn to cheer on the FDNY's Elite Responders – made up of members from

EMS Stations 39 and 44, and Battalion 38 – as they took on the Brookdale Top Brass.

EMT Peter Johnson of Station 58, who helped coordinate the event, said the competition was fierce, but the doctors captured a 86-65 win over the EMS team.

"It was a great event to kick off the holiday season, have some fun and raise money for a good cause," EMT Johnson said.

The game raised \$425 for the charity.

To learn more about Toys for Tots or to make a donation, visit their web-site at www.toysfortots.org.



The charity game ended with a win for the Brookdale University Hospital Medical Center physicians.

Photo courtesy of EMT Doug Stewart, EMS Station 39



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NEWSLETTER OF THE NYC FIRE DEPARTMENT

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A 142 YEAR HISTORY

OF COMMITMENT, COURAGE & COMPASSION