

FDNY Announces New Assistant Commissioner for Family Assistance

Serena Joyce just joined the Fire Department as the Assistant Commissioner for Family Assistance.

My background in human services began seventeen years ago as a Peace Corps volunteer in West Africa. As a Peace Corps volunteer I learned perhaps the most important lesson in management: that any mission's greatest asset is its people. Eight years later I moved into executive administration, where my duties ranged from crisis management and operations oversight to fundraising and training programs. Although the transition brought me from environments that lacked running water and electricity to places consumed by computers and wireless technology, the lesson I learned in Peace Corps still held true; people were still the mission's greatest asset.

For the past twelve months I have worked at the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). One of my first tasks was to work on an After Action report for the Disaster Assistance Service Centers. I also served as an executive board member of Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) and on the team that is responsible for



Serena Joyce

developing a human services response blueprint in the event of future disasters.

At OEM I had the great fortune to work with firefighters on emergency preparedness, response and recovery initiatives. During this time, I came to notice a number of impressive traits common to FDNY members, perhaps the most remarkable being the manner in which they identify challenges and then work together to solve them.

In my brief time with the Family Assistance Unit, I have seen this same resolve in the families, uniformed and civilian members of the FDNY. As we move further away from 9/11, the needs of our families are changing, and the FAU must change with them. I look forward to leading this unit to face the

challenges of the future.

In closing, it is an honor to serve the families of the FDNY as Assistant Commissioner for Family Assistance. I hope in the days and weeks ahead I will have the opportunity to meet with not only family members, but the many firefighters and liaisons who are serving these families. My phone is: (718) 999-2030. My e-mail is: joyces@fdny.nyc.gov. I look forward to hearing from you.

Counseling Services Unit Thanks Sponsors and Supporters at its First-Annual Dinner

By Angela Coyle,
FDNY Counseling Services Unit

The Fire Museum hosted the Counseling Service Unit's first-annual dinner on March 6 to thank those that have supported the unit over the past 18 months. Generous donors represented included Project Liberty, the IAFF, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF), the New York Times, Morgan Stanley, and other corporate funders of the CSU's programs.

In order for each attendee to understand how their contributions have been put to good use, they were given a copy of the CSU's annual report, which covers in depth the myriad challenges faced by FDNY personnel and their families in the wake of 9/11, as well as the programs the Counseling Service Unit has instituted to address those challenges. Attendees were also treated to free tours of the museum before being formally thanked by the Department for all they have contributed to the promotion of health and wellness within the FDNY.



Malachy Corrigan addresses those attending the CSU annual dinner.

Over a dinner blessed by Monsignor John Delendick, attendees listened to speakers including Chief of Operations Sal Cassano, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Kerry Kelly, and NFFF Director Ron Siarnicki. The promotional version of the CSU video, "When the Alarm Sounds," was subsequently shown, followed by a speech from CSU director Malachy Corrigan.

Malachy thanked all those who so willingly have contributed their individual skills to the greater task of healing.

"You are the clinician, healing with your skills," he said. "You are a peer, healing by listening... You are a writer, film maker, publisher, healing by communication. You are a doctor or nurse healing by... compassionate use of your skills."

Citing more than 42,000 FDNY members and families that have participated in CSU programs, as well as more than 4,200 members that have participated in counseling, he professed a vision of healing "physically, spiritually, and emotionally that is difficult to measure, but necessary to achieve."