



MDFR Hosts Children's Fire Safety Festival



Miami-Dade Fire Rescue (MDFR) hosted the 22nd Annual Children's Fire Safety Festival, on Oct. 5-9. This festival is the official start to Fire Prevention Month.

The Fire Safety Festival was designed to provide students from first through third grades with an opportunity to "LEARN NOT TO BURN." The children participated in various learning stations that taught them life-saving techniques such as Stop, Drop and Roll; kitchen and home fire safety; 9-1-1; crawl low under smoke; electrical safety; and home fire drills and escape.

Every October, MDFR teams up with the National Fire Protection Association

(NFPA) to celebrate National Fire Prevention Week. Fire Prevention Month was established in 1871 to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures and burned more than 2,000 acres.

This year's campaign, "Stay Fire Smart! Don't Get Burned," focuses on ways to keep homes fire safe and prevent painful burns. Each year, roughly 3,000 people die as a result of home fires and burns, and more than 200,000 individuals are seen in the nation's emergency rooms for burn injuries.



*A Message
from Fire Chief
Herminio Lorenzo,
MDFR Director*

I am sure that everyone is aware of the County's FY 2009-10 budget shortfall stemming from the decline in property values. Since personnel costs represent a major portion of the operating budget, a deficit in revenue affects personnel actions including potential employee layoffs and cuts to salaries and benefits.

As a result, MDFR's service plan for this fiscal year eliminates 29 civilian positions, reduces direct services provided by uniformed personnel, and freezes 59 sworn positions. Our department's adopted budget includes savings from these actions but does not contain adequate revenue to compensate remaining employees with their current salaries and benefits. All employees that work under the purview of the Mayor and are not represented by bargaining units will take a 5 percent pay cut, lose flex benefits and longevity bonuses, effective November 1st.

When negotiations are complete with the County's 10 unions and ratified by the BCC, we will know the true impact of the approved budget. It is likely that all County employees will undergo a pay reduction in addition to reductions related to flex and premium pay.

Nothing is more difficult than having to make decisions to reduce our dedicated workforce and make pay cuts for remaining staff. I realize how these actions impact everyone in our nation's current economic downturn, specifically within our department.

I thank you all for your unwavering commitment to MDFR and our community as we adapt to different ways of conducting business. We are sure to pull through these times together even stronger in anticipation of recovery and progress ahead. Meanwhile, I will keep you informed of all negotiations and future developments in the budget implementation.

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Comments about Hotlines.
Contact Elizabeth
Calzadilla-Fiallo at efiallo@miamidade.gov.
Submissions welcomed.

Busiest in the Land

MDFR's Aerial 19 in North Miami was named the busiest ladder truck in North America by Firehouse Magazine. In 2008, Aerial 19 responded to 5,328 calls, which averages out to 14.5 calls daily. Chicago Fire Department's Tower 22 came in second place responding to 600 fewer calls. Engine 7 from West Little River was recognized as the 14th-busiest engine by responding to 4,602 emergency calls. MDRF responded to 233,080 calls in 2008, making it the eighth-busiest fire department in North America. MDRF is the seventh-largest fire department in the United States with over 2,500 firefighters.

"I believe this is a testament to how we are continuing to provide our community with the highest level of service," said Fire Chief Herminio Lorenzo.



Aerial 19 runs an average of 14.5 calls a day, making them the busiest ladder truck in all of the United States and Canada.

Did You Know?

That the Media and Public Relations Bureau responded to 738 calls from June 2008 through June 2009.

Kudos to Capt. Leslie Lazo and Firefighter Michael Flynn who earned gold medals in water skiing for the United States at the 2009 World Police and Fire Games. This is Capt. Lazo's seventh gold medal in this event. This was FF Flynn's first time competing.



We Will Never Forget

In remembrance of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue joined the rest of the nation in memorializing the many men and women who lost their lives in New York, Washington and Shanksville, PA, on this tragic day. On the eighth anniversary, MDRF honored the 2,993 souls lost.

Aventura Hospital Salutes MDRF



Representatives from Aventura Hospital, the Aventura Marketing Council, and the City of Aventura saluted MDRF for their accomplishments in 2009.

Miami-Dade Fire Rescue was saluted by Aventura Hospital and Medical Center and the Aventura Marketing Council (AMC) for being the 2009 EMS Provider of the Year, on Sept. 16, 2009. AMC Chair Cliff Schulman of Greenberg Traurig and Aventura Hospital CEO Heather Rohan welcomed Fire Chief Herminio Lorenzo and recognized more than 2,000 men and women of MDRF who serve more than 2 million residents, businesses, and visitors 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Aventura Mayor Susan Gottlieb presented Fire Chief Herminio Lorenzo with a proclamation emphasizing, "Members of Miami-Dade Fire Rescue are unsung heroes... When the moment we hope never comes does- we're glad these are the men and women who serve the community with great pride."

Aventura Hospital was one of the first to participate in the STEMI Network (ST-Segment Elevation Myocardial Infarction). With this program in place, the mortality rate for cardiac emergencies has dropped to less than one percent, the lowest rate in the nation.

The hundreds of businessmen and community leaders present also learned of MDRF's accomplishments in 2009 which include: "2009 EMS Provider of the Year" by the Florida Department of Health; the Advanced Life Support Team winning the international 2009 World Emergency Response Championship; and Medical Director Dr. Donald G. Rosenberg being named one of America's Top Cardiologists by the Consumers' Research Council of America.

Powering Down is a Bright Idea

Beginning in November, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue (MDRF) will launch its Gearing Up to Power Down Program. MDRF aims to have all eligible stations and facilities reduce electricity usage by at least 10 percent. Fifty percent of the savings will be reinvested for more efficient televisions, Blu-ray DVD players, and any other suitable facility-related items suggested by MDRF personnel.

Log on to MDRFnet (<http://mdfnet>) for program details and continue to check back as the program develops. Each eligible station and facility's power usage will be posted on a monthly basis. Let's all do our part to make Miami-Dade Fire Rescue—Always Ready, Proud to ConServe!



MDRF Employee Profile Rhonda Usry: A Super Hero

MDRF Dispatcher Rhonda Usry has always worked behind the scenes without notoriety at her console in the Fire Communications Center, where she handles calls in guiding citizens through emergency situations and sending units to scenes. But on Aug. 16, Rhonda stood in the limelight on the field at Land Shark Stadium. On Marlins Super Hero Day, Rhonda was acknowledged as one of those "super heroes" from our community.

While Rhonda remained surrounded by spectators, the Florida Marlins gave her the

special recognition she deserved. The Marlins honored Rhonda for handling a west Miami-Dade grass fire as lead dispatcher on the evening of April 6. The call quickly escalated into a third-alarm brush fire; and Rhonda simultaneously kept abreast of all incident-command requests, answered numerous phone calls, entered information into the computer, and coordinated all specialty fire units that responded to the scene. She kept her composure throughout the entire incident.

Such exceptional service

seems to be the norm for Rhonda, who has received previous departmental recognition for her performance. According to Fire Communications Officer Lisa Jacobs, "Rhonda never gets ruffled and displays a consistent professional demeanor even during the times of intense high call volumes."

If we'd ask Rhonda how she continues to maintain such composure, she'd probably say that she just takes her job one call at a time – just as she has for the past 29 years. Her contributions in coordinating hundreds of thousands of emergency re-

sponses truly make Rhonda our "super hero."



Florida Marlins Honor MDRF's Best

Land Shark Stadium was the place to be for MDRF during the summer. In July and August, three MDRF employees were honored by the Florida Marlins during pre-game festivities.

On July 4, Firefighter Ramiro Mayorga was recognized for his bravery and actions as a combat unit medic in Iraq. On July 5, 2005, insurgents carrying rocket-propelled

grenades attacked Firefighter Mayorgas Florida National Guard Unit. Many in the unit, including Mayorga, were hurt. He quickly treated himself and went on to treat others who were injured in the attack. For his quick thinking and helping to save others lives, FF Mayorga was presented with a refurbished M-1 carbine rifle from the "M1 for Vets Project."



The Race is On

The MIT Get Fit Challenge officially kicked off on August 31. Forty-one participants, 20 females and 21 males, have been weighed in and measured and have begun to train for better health. They will be weighed in again during the week of November 16th. The participant with the highest percent of body fat loss will take the grand prize of \$420 for the male category and \$400 for the female category. There will also be prizes for second and third place runners-up.



Last years "Get Fit" Challenge raised \$20,000 for the Children's Caring Cancer Center.

Lights, Camera, Action!

MDRF is headed to the small screen. Production has commenced on a 10-episode reality television series featuring the department's Fire Boat and Air Rescue operations. The show, which is yet to be titled, will air on a leading national cable network in the spring of 2010. 2CMedia, Inc., a Miami Beach-based TV production company, and ITV Studios are behind the project. They have created dozens of shows for renowned U.S. and international TV networks and are the recipient of several Emmy awards. They are also the creative force behind the hit show "First 48," which is currently airing on A&E.



Respect for Everyone

By: Chief Ray Barreto, Special Operations

We are entering a very stressful and uncertain time, not only in MDRF history, but in our nation. Our Fire Chief, Herminio Lorenzo, often speaks that now more then ever we need to work together on solutions and respect everyone's point of view in the process.

Times like these often create high emotions and tension. MDRF has been very good to all of us and our families. It is vital that we solve problems and work on solutions

rather then tear down this great department.

In many cases, we need to agree to disagree. In a healthy organization, it is good that we can disagree and take different perspectives to training. Let's remember to respect everyone and work together counter-productive when we let our emotions get in the way and we attack each other and not the problem. Remember, we are family, and everyone is vital to this organization. Everyone has responsibilities

to its mission and the growth of this department.

We have been very blessed; MDRF is a premier department with the best personnel, equipment and training. Let's remember to respect everyone and work together in keeping this department strong and at the top of the fire service. We will rise to our challenges by working together, and we will prevail!



Yearbook Update

The Yearbook Committee has been hard at work for the last year and a half putting together a publication that uniquely represents MDR. On September 18, the committee finished making the final edits to the book.

These edits were sent back to the publisher, MT Publishing, and the next step is printing this commemorative book. The books are expected to be mailed out in December, just in time for the 75th Anniversary of the department in 2010.

The yearbook is made up of more than 300 pages and highlights all areas of the department. This is the first time in MDR's history that a yearbook will be printed completely in color.

There is still time to order your book. If you would like to place an order or buy an extra copy, contact MT Publishing at www.mtpublishing.com or 1-888-263-4702.



Since July 2000, 14 babies have been dropped off at Safe Haven facilities in Miami-Dade County.

New Deliveries to the Rescue

Starting in early November, MDR will be receiving 16 new rescue vehicles. These new rescues are known as Furions. They have been updated from the two existing Furions in our fleet located at Stations 2 and 3. One notable difference is a separate air conditioning unit for the back cabin.

The Furions will provide two more years of useful front-line life than the rescue trucks currently in the field. Out-of-service time for them will greatly be reduced since preventative maintenance can be done at longer intervals.



The Furions are just 6 inches shorter than an engine. They provide firefighters with better visibility and maneuverability. The back cabin is 170 inches, giving patients a more comfortable ride and more room for them to be treated by first responders.

The design for the Furion was created by MDR. The front cab is made by Spartan, and the back cab is made by Pierce. Other fire departments around the country will be taking delivery of these trucks that we helped to design, making MDR an innovator in the industry.

MDFR Assists with PSA for Safe Haven for Newborns Program

By law, every MDR station is a Safe Haven where new parents can bring their newborns to be turned over to state custody. In 2000, the Florida legislature passed the Safe Haven Act, allowing distressed parents to turn their newborn babies over to fire and EMS stations, and hospitals without fear of punishment or prosecution. The Safe Haven law was revised in 2008 to increase the age of eligible babies from three days to seven days. To date, 139 newborns have been received at "safe havens" in Florida.

In 2006, MDR officially partnered with the Gloria

M. Sylverio Foundation's Safe Haven for Newborns Program and committed to building awareness of the program within our communities. Most recently, the foundation turned to our department to provide a station setting and personnel to participate in the production of a Public Service Announcement (PSA) about its program. The PSA will be made available throughout the state of Florida in English, Spanish and Creole. Anyone interested in more information about the Florida Safe Haven law or about the Safe Haven for Newborns Program can go to www.asafehavenfornewborns.com or call the Foundation at 1-877-767-2229.



Firefighter Receives the Benjamin Franklin Fire Service Award for Valor

Firefighter Nicholas DiGiacomo was awarded the 2009 International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) International Benjamin Franklin Fire Service Award for Valor. This year marks the 40th anniversary for this award, named in honor of one of the first fire chiefs in the United States—Benjamin Franklin.

This award is given to an individual who shows the unwavering spirit of service, courage, and heroism of firefighters around the world. Firefighter DiGiacomo was selected because of his selflessness and bravery in rescuing two people trapped in a burning yacht in Miami Beach.



MIAMI-DADE PETS CAN BREATHE A SIGH OF RELIEF

MDFR received 27 sets of pet oxygen masks that were donated by the Miami Obedience Club. The masks are used at fire scenes where pets are rescued and require oxygen. Like the oxygen masks used by humans, the pet masks provide oxygen to dogs and cats that have suffered from smoke inhalation during a fire. They are specially designed to fit over an animal's snout, and they come in three different sizes.

On Sept. 16, CBS 4 News aired a story about the need for an additional 58 pet oxygen masks on MDFR's trucks in their Neighbors 4 Neighbors Community report.

The Clydey Foundation saw this report and on Sept. 26, presented a check to MDFR to outfit each fire truck in Miami-Dade County with this life-saving equipment.

Pets in South Florida can now breathe easily thanks to the Miami Obedience Club and the Clydey Foundation.



Training Facility Update

Last December, MDFR broke ground on a state-of-the-art training facility behind headquarters. The construction of the facility is well under way. All of the tilt-up panels and the structural roof trusses have been put in place for the main administration building. The interior partitions and the interior rough-in work is now being completed along with the area surrounding the pool.

The buildings that will house the actual training props have all of the walls and structural roof trusses in place.

Construction will begin shortly on the steel structure for the open-air building adjacent to the main administration building.



The project is scheduled for substantial completion in mid-2010.

Strides Against Breast Cancer

October was Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and MDFR joined forces with the American Cancer Society to "Make Strides Against Breast Cancer." On Saturday, October 3, MDFR Dispatchers and Explorers joined thousands to participate in a 5K walk fundraising event.

Making Strides Team Leader Carolyn Stilwell has been working hard to help raise funds on behalf of MDFR. To date, MDFR has raised over \$6,000. This donation will help the American Cancer Society find better ways to prevent, detect, and treat breast cancer as well as provide help and hope to people facing the disease.

It is still not too late to help this worthwhile cause. MDFR is selling firefighter teddy bears for \$10 each to help raise additional funds. If you would like to purchase a bear or make a donation, contact Carolyn Stilwell at 786-331-5119.



Miami-Dade Fire Rescue

Main number:
786-331-5000

www.miamidade.gov/mdfr

Mission Statement:
We protect people, property and the environment by providing responsive professional and humanitarian fire rescue services essential to public health, safety and well-being.

Produced by the MDFR Media and Public Relations Bureau



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