

FIREFIGHTERS & STAFF ADOPT FAMILIES IN NEED

Partnership with Friends of Faith Foundation helps families of childhood cancer patients. *Page 19*



COLUMBUS FIRE CADETS WELCOME POLICE CADETS

Fire Cadet Training Staff Introduces Police Cadets to "Deck of Cards" during joint workout. *Page 3*

The Columbus Division of Fire Newsletter

THE **COMMAND POST**

Autumn • 2020



Dr. Jenny Hamilton visits Station 13 to thank EMS crews for saving her son injured in a rollover crash *See Page 4*

The 31st Annual Firefighter Awards Issue: Interim Fire Chief Jeffry Happ Visits Firehouses To Honor Firefighters, Medics & Support Staff For Exemplary Service During Pre-Mask Mandate Tour • See Page 6

2020

OFFICE OF THE FIRE CHIEF
AUTUMN • 2020

Approaching the New Year provides us an opportunity to pause and reflect on the challenges we have encountered in 2020.

More importantly, it affords us a brief moment to celebrate the accomplishments and the resilience we have displayed in overcoming those challenges. It would be an understatement to say 2020 has been a year like no other, your professionalism and dedication has been on full display throughout this journey. I would like to highlight a few of the bright spots that stand out to me.

The team work and innovation that was involved in developing and implementing the Divisions response to the COVID pandemic began before I became the Interim Fire Chief and continues to evolve. These efforts involved every member of every rank in the department and are a true display of cohesive and collaborative TEAM work. Even though several leadership positions have changed in various bureaus since the beginning of the pandemic, we have stayed the course and continue to put our member's safety and well-being at the forefront.

Built upon a solid foundation, each Bureau including Emergency Services, Support Services, Training, Fire Prevention, and Administration, in coordination with Medical Director Dr. Robert Lowe, continues to contribute their expertise, knowledge and resources allowing us to maintain operational readiness. All of this has been accomplished by working with each other and including partners such as IAFF Local 67 in critical decisions that affect our members and the residents we serve.

The Division continues to grow in a positive direction towards a more diverse and inclusive work force that represents the community we serve. We graduated a new recruit class in June that was the most diverse in decades and started a new class in December that is a close second.

Early next year we launching the IDEAL task force. The Inclusion, Diversity, Equality, Acceptance, & Likeness task force will be comprised of members of all ranks and demographics to develop and implement a road map that will guide the Division. The overarching goal is to create a culture within



Interim Fire Chief Jeffrey Happ

the Division where all members not only feel welcomed and included, but ARE and have a voice in the organization. The Columbus Division of Fire will strive to become the IDEAL fire department and proudly represent our community.

Team work, servant leadership, positive morale, and family are at the core of my beliefs personally, and as your Fire Chief. Collectively these values have guided my decision-making throughout this pandemic and all of 2020. Each and every one of you has risen to the challenge and followed our lead to keep each other safe and the Division moving forward.

As the Holidays approach, your fortitude to stay the course will be tested. The vaccine will be arriving soon but it alone will not end this battle against COVID. We must continue to strive to always do the right thing, wear our masks, and get vaccinated to keep ourselves and our families safe.

I personally would like to wish you and your family "Happy Holidays" and look forward to a prosperous and safe New Year. Together we are stronger and together we can work safely to get things back to normal.

Warmest Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Happ". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Jeffrey M. Happ

Interim Fire Chief



Welcome to the Columbus Division of Fire Command Post. This newsletter focuses on the fire services industry, how we affect the greater community and what we need to do to refine our skills as fire service professionals.

Our mission is to research and write articles that are insightful, interesting, helpful and inspiring. If there is something you feel that we should cover, then let us know. We hope that you enjoy what you read.

Send letters to the editor, story ideas, digital photos or upcoming events to piofire@columbus.gov.

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Columbus Fire Cadets Join Police Cadets For Joint Workout

Columbus Fire Cadets were joined by Columbus Police Cadets for a joint work-out at the Fire Training Academy on Oct. 16th, 2020.

Firefighter Elizabeth Finnegan led the workouts for the joint Police and Fire Cadet PT session for the current classes. Finnegan joined the Division in 2016 before earning a Health and Fitness Management degree at Capital University along with All American honors as a track and field athlete. Finnegan now works as a fulltime instructor at the Fire Training Academy.

The two cadet groups began with a two mile run before meeting in the gym for a calisthenics routine called “Deck of Cards” workout, where each card suit represents an exercise; diamonds are pushups, hearts are jumping jacks, clubs are leg lifts and spades are air squats. The card’s number represent the number of repetitions. Each cadet gets a card, and must lead the group vocally in his or her exercise when their turn comes up.

The idea for a joint work-out originally came from Fire Captain

Sexton Townes and Police Officer Kiara Husband. Captain Townes was an instructor during the first Fire Cadet class in April of 2019.

“I think it was good to our cadets and their cadets interacting to get a different perspective on our programs. Some of them actually already knew each other, so that was nice to see your friends and see that you’re doing the same kind of day, essentially,” said Finnegan.

“It was nice to have the police see the physical things we do because they are not allotted physical training time like we are. PT (physical training) is a daily part of our curriculum,” said Finnegan.

“Sargent Husband and Officer Alli Lindsey saw they could mix this (Deck of Cards) workout into their training day as well, because it was quick and relies entirely on body weight so there’s no equipment needed,” said Finnegan.

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A Grateful Family Shows Up at EMS Award of Merit Presentation

Photos top: Jenny Hamilton poses with Jack and Martha Hamilton and crews of Fire Station 13 during an EMS Award of Merit presentation.

Photo right: Drew Hamilton and his twin sister Anna.

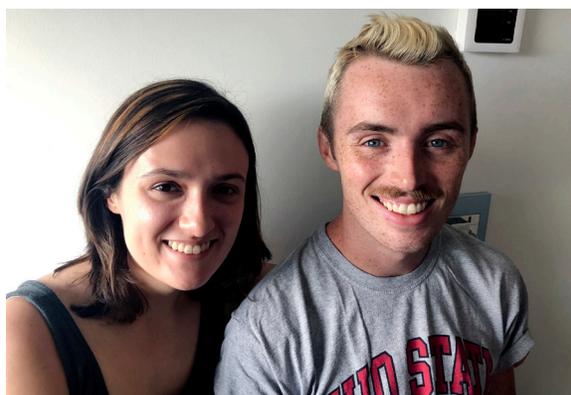
Photo next page: Jenny Hamilton shares accident scene and post-op photos of her son Drew with the crews who saved his life.

Columbus Fire Interim Fire Chief Jeffrey Happ visited Station 13 in the North Campus area on October 27th, 2020 to bestow the EMS Award of Merit to a group of firefighters and medics who had responded to a serious auto accident this summer.

Chief Happ was met at the Arcadia Avenue station by the family of the victim, Drew Hamilton. The Hamilton's traveled from Cincinnati to personally thank the crews of Station 13 who responded that day.

Battalion Chief Michael Ruddle, Lieutenant Paul Richards and Firefighters James Gray, Anthony Ulery, Anthony Francescon, Dennis Coffey, Craig McDonald, Matthew Workman, Alexander Watson, Charles Pritsel, Christopher Fields, David Treffert, Ryan Brotherton, Todd Gritter earned

the EMS Award of Merit. This award is typically presented during the Division of Fire's Annual Award Banquet each autumn. The global pandemic forced the cancellation of this year's banquet, prompting Chief Happ to visit each fire station to deliver dozens of awards for exemplary service.



"When crews arrived, they found a patient in the back seat of the vehicle who had been in a rollover accident. He was in cardiac arrest. Medic

crews worked tirelessly on this patient, stabilized him, and transported him to OSU," said Chief Happ before handing out the awards.

"ER Physicians worked with the patient, who had a history of a heart condition, and the patient survived," said Chief Happ.

“OSU Medical Center ER praised Columbus Fire Medics for their medical care and delivery to the ER. The OSU Outreach Manager remarked that it was one of the most detailed and heartwarming follow ups she has ever done,” said Chief Happ.

Drew’s mother Jenny Hamilton traveled to Columbus along with Drew’s uncle John Hamilton and grandparents Jack and Martha Hamilton to witness the presentation. Jenny told the assembled crowd that Drew’s underlying heart condition was discovered during his undergraduate work at Case Western Reserve University where Drew won All-American Honors as a swimmer. Drew Hamilton is now enrolled at the OSU Moritz College of Law. The accident was a terrible shock to Jenny, a physician herself.

“Life changes in an instant and miracles do happen. These are two things that came true on the evening of Wednesday, August 19th. My 24 year-old son Drew had a cardiac arrest and lost consciousness while driving south on North High Street near Hudson Avenue,” Jenny Hamilton told the assembled crew.



“The call I got that evening was from a social worker at the Wexner OSU emergency room. A call that described how he was in a rollover accident and arrived via EMS in ventricular fibrillation. She went on to tell me they had finally gotten a heartbeat after working on him for 30 to 40 minutes and that he had been intubated and taken to CAT scan. I was then handed off to the ER resident and then the cardiology fellow who was giving me real time information as they were learning more,” Jenny Hamilton said.

“My mind was racing as a mom as well as a physician. I had so many questions, including how long had he been down and what his neurological status was. I was thinking of all the possible scenarios and outcomes, and most of them were very, very bleak.”

“Little did I know of the experienced, fast thinking first responders that rescued him who never gave up. Fast forward to now where my son is still on earth walking, talking, breathing and actively engaged in all of his classes as a third

year law student here at OSU with absolutely no neurological deficits. He now has an implanted defibrillator in case he needs it, and is still having an ongoing cardiac workup, but he is truly a miracle,” Hamilton said.

“You all played a key role in his rescue and his ability to go on to live a productive and happy life. We still have our Drew in our lives. Words simply cannot express the deep gratitude our family has for you all, your skills, your dedication and your resiliency in doing what you do on a daily basis,” Hamilton said

“I had spoken with Jim Gray and Craig McDonald two days after the accident to find out about Drew’s journey. Beth

Cottrell was able to give me the specifics on the timing. The call came in at 19:19 that evening and you were onsite within a mere three minutes. At 19:22. You left at 19:27 after pulling Drew out of his rolled car, starting CPR, placing an airway, shocking him and placing the LUCAS device him for compressions. You arrived at the OSU Medical Center at 19:33 where you stayed to assist with

the code,” Hamilton said

“Within a matter of 11 minutes, my son went from dying in his car to having every possible measure done to save him in the emergency room. What a true miracle it was that Drew was at the right place at the right time with the right people that could save his life,” Hamilton said.

“You are now part of his life story and we are so glad that you are being recognized for the thankless work that you do so willingly day in and day out,” said Jenny Hamilton.

Jenny then read a brief note from Drew Hamilton.

“I just wanted to say thank you to everyone who was involved in my rescue. Without each and every one of you, I would not be alive today, about to enter my last semester of law school with a full life ahead of me. I cannot imagine the stress that this work puts you under, but I appreciate all that you do. Thank you again for giving my life back to me,” Drew Hamilton wrote.



31ST ANNUAL FIREFIGHTER AWARDS

31st Annual Columbus Firefighter Awards • 2020

Interim Fire Chief Jeffrey Happ

It was my honor to present the 31st Annual Columbus Fire Department Awards the fall. Due to Covid-19 and social distancing, we were not able to host the banquet as we usually do.

However, there are too many phenomenal, selfless, heroic actions taken by firefighters and citizens of the City of Columbus not to have this awards ceremony. I am so proud of the men and women of Columbus Fire for adapting to a whole new way of work life and embracing it while still serving the needs of Columbus citizens. *(editors note: photos taken for these awards occurred before the Division-wide mandatory mask mandate went into effect)*

The Columbus Fire Department Honor Guard is an integral part of the Division. They are called upon to post the colors at events, show respect for the fallen at funerals, and preserve the pride of the Columbus Division of Fire. Three members of the Columbus Fire Department Honor Guard have served for over a year while maintaining their firefighter status. Firefighters Martin Bowen, Amber Salsburey, and Elizabeth Finnegan are being awarded the Distinguished Service Award for their service to the Division's Honor Guard.

Columbus Fire Dispatchers are the first contact for most calls for help. All the dispatchers are trained to assess the situation over the phone, get the appropriate equipment to the scene, and try to calm the caller. All the dispatchers are great at what they do. However, once in a while there is a bright shining star. Firefighter Travis Floyd is one such star. While taking a call for an injured child, Firefighter Floyd continued to talk with the caller, extracting additional information, until it was determined that a family member could have been involved with the injuries to the child. Firefighter Floyd immediately sent this information out to the medic as well as CPD, who were also enroute. Firefighter Floyd demonstrates why communication with callers is key when determining the elements of the call for help. Firefighter Floyd is awarded the Fire Service Award of Merit for his dedication.

When you have small children, and you notice a fire, your immediate reaction is to get your children to safety. Lavansea Green was in just this scenario. While cooking in her kitchen, she smelled smoke. She investigated to find a fire outside the front door to her home. She called 911, rescued her children outside, then went back inside to knock on doors, getting everyone outside to safety before fire companies arrived. Ms. Green's brave and quick actions saved many lives this day as the fire had gotten into the attic and walls of the home. Lavansea Green is awarded the Citizens Distinguished Service Award.

Covid-19 changed the way the entire country operated. Columbus Fire was no exception. Fire Departments cannot work from home as a lot of businesses did during this time.



Although all firefighters and officers embraced the “new norm” to continue serving the need of Columbus Citizens, there were a handful who went the extra mile so the firefighters and officers at the stations could do their duty safely.

Assistant Chief Tracy Smith worked with other team members to develop an alternative response plan and other Covid-19 projects. Battalion Chief James Sancin completed the initial ICS 209 for the Division of Fire and submitted it to the Franklin County EOC prior to handing the function over to Captain Lorentz.

Battalion Chief David Bernzweig was instrumental during the initial stages of developing CFD’s response. He aided in developing the initial Incident Action Plan (IAP). He developed the PPE standards that exist still to this day. Additionally, he developed the system for contact tracing utilizing the Infectious Disease Coordinators. He also put in the extra hours staying late, coming in early, working weekends, and was always available. Chief Bernzweig’s knowledge in respiratory protection proved to be extremely valuable during Covid-19, allowing the development of the ICS 208 providing safety guidance to meet our #1 goal of Protecting the Workforce. Chief David Bernzweig is awarded the Distinguished Service Award.

Battalion Chief Stephen Saltsman developed the decon station at Groves Road and assisted with managing Supplies. Lt. Troy Knode developed the supply unit for Covid-19 and served as the unit leader. Lt. Michael Thomas developed the facilities unit for Covid-19 and served as the unit leader. Battalion Chief Steven Martin is the designee for Emergency Services Function. Chief Martin assisted with the ICS 209 with the Franklin County EMA.

Captain James Lorentz is the liaison to the Franklin County EOC and maintains the weekly ICS 209 with them. Firefighter Ryan Arthur reached out to offer his computer skills to help with IAP

documentation projects.

Battalion Chief Jeffrey Geitter developed alternative dispatching procedures for Covid-19 responses.

Lt. Isaac Toliver transferred his work location to ES1 office staff and managed the office to keep the aides from being interrupted. Lt. Toliver developed the SIQ tracking project and performed several gap analysis reports from various resource documents.

Firefighter William Ehrgood, on his own initiative, researched various intelligence outlets to provide General Staff with important official intelligence related to Covid-19. He also developed various reporting mechanisms and continues to report data at the beginning of every planning session. Firefighter Ehrgood’s commitment to the response was extremely valuable for daily context and situational awareness. Ehrgood also led the intelligence unit with the planning section.

Firefighter William Herbert ensures that members who are symptomatic are placed in isolation, close contacts are placed in quarantine, and casual contacts are placed in the monitoring program. Firefighter Herbert adjusted his work schedule for a long term assignment and maintains his duties currently as the Covid-19 response continues. Firefighter Rod Brown assisted with contact tracing beyond his normal work duties.

Deputy Chief Patrick Ferguson worked with Dr. Lowe and Columbus Public Health to track Covid-19 and develop contingency plans prior to the March 13th Emergency Declaration. Chief Ferguson developed alternative EMS response models that aided in ensuring our EMS response not only maintained excellent service but also allowed for extra protection of our members that deliver that service.

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Chief Ferguson's professionalism, hard work ethic, and knowledge allowed for CFD to address Covid-19 while maintaining EMS operational efficiencies.

Firefighter Timothy Davis, Firefighter Caroline Allen, and Battalion Chief Richard Richardson developed tools and methods to implement POD staffing. Without these three people, POD staffing would not have happened. They worked together as a team to develop a plan to envision a different staffing model to help meet our #1 goal of Protect the Workforce. The team took an idea from concept to reality. Together they knew what Telestaff was capable of, developed tools to assist with making the change and followed through to make POD staffing actually work.

Captain Melvin "Doug" Hart assisted in developing and growing the Incident Action Plan (IAP) and facilitated a record-keeping and publishing process. Captain Hart's knowledge in developing event action plans assisted with developing a professional document that has been shared across the country. Captain Hart was always available working extra hours and weekends. Captain Hart's involvement has assisted in making our response easy to follow and ensured accurate documentation from the onset of Covid-19.

Assistant Chief Tracy Smith, Battalion Chief James Sancin, Battalion Chief Stephen Saltsman, Lt. Troy Knode, Lt. Michael Thomas, Battalion Chief Steven Martin, Captain James Lorentz, Firefighters Ryan Arthur, Rod Brown, William Ehrgood, William Herbert, Timothy Davis, Caroline Allen, Battalion Chief Jeffrey Geitter, Lt. Isaac Toliver, Deputy Chief Patrick Ferguson, Battalion Chief Richard Richardson, and Captain Melvin "Doug" Hart are all awarded the Fire Service Award of Merit.

Our civilian staff, although small, works extremely hard to support Columbus Firefighters and officers. Ronald Taylor took on the role of securing and storing additional supplies related to Covid-19. Ron's knowledge and ability to find alternative ways to secure supplies helped us to conserve EMS supplies. Additionally, Ron provided space and management for storing supplies for the Franklin County EMA and other city agencies.

Phillip Battle was an integral part of the documentation unit. Phil does not normally work on incident management, however, he was able to shift his duties in order to assist with customizing ICS forms and helping to create a historical record of our Covid-19 response.

Josh Bryan took on the role of preparing the contact tracing sheet. Josh researched how to use Excel on the internet to teach himself how to use it. He then took the

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information we had started to compile and created a tracking sheet along with a summary that provided a visual status.

Dr. Robert Lowe was previously involved with Covid-19 tracking since early 2020. Dr. Lowe developed contingency plans prior to the March 13th Emergency Declaration. Dr. Lowe assisted with the development of alternative EMS response models, contingency plans for response to high risk facilities, and contact tracing procedures. He maintained a working relationship with the Columbus Department of Health and provided many medical based recommendations. As Dr. Lowe became more involved with a rapidly changing situation, CFD personnel realized how blessed we are to have gained him as our Medical Director. Brenda Schultz had a non-traditional role with our Covid-19 response. Brenda took on an extra workload assisting the documentation unit to create a historical record of all our documents relating to Covid-19.

Ronald Taylor, Phillip Battle, Josh Bryan, Dr. Robert Lowe, and Brenda Schultz are awarded the Citizens Distinguished Service Award.

Firefighters sometimes have additional skill sets that set them apart and are an asset to the Division. Lt. Christopher Gutman has been with the Fire Department 10 years and has an education in Emergency Preparedness. Over the past year, Lt. Gutman has assisted Emergency Services with quarterly and yearly mass casualty exercises at John Glenn International Airport. Lt. Gutman has been instrumental in preparations, coordination, briefings, and scheduling these exercises. He has gone above and beyond expectations for the Division. Lt. Gutman is awarded the Fire Service Award of Merit.

The Columbus Division of Fire has one of the best training sections in the state, making sure firefighters are prepared for every scenario. Starting in October 2018, a tree rescue training program was designed for unique situations. Joseph Tree Service agreed to provide training to our Heavy Rescue section. Joseph Tree Service put together a training to rescue a person from an elevated area which has been invaluable in many areas.

After the Division purchased tree rescue equipment for the Rescue Companies, Joseph Tree Service has been able to properly train personnel to use and deploy technical equipment through these trainings. They also trained on how to remove a person from an elevated tree canopy. Joseph Tree Service then agreed to record a training video for all firefighters and has conducted continuous training sessions, offering CE classes for the Rescue Companies as well as other firefighters. David Joseph, Mike Joseph, Evan Beck, and James Hazelrigg are awarded the Citizens Distinguished Service Award for time and effort over the last two years and going forward with training on tree and elevated rescues.

A car accident is a horrible event, especially if you are injured. Sometimes accidents happen at just the right place, such as the accident at I-670 and Neil Avenue. EMS 10 and Medic 25 were dispatched to this address to find a vehicle that had rolled over four times. The victim was badly injured and being administered to by a physician and other hospital personnel. One person was holding the person's neck still, one was applying pressure to a head wound, and others were assisting firefighters and EMS with additional help. The person was cut out of the car and transported to the hospital. All this was done without regard to their own safety to save the life of this accident victim. *(2020 Fire Awards continued next page)*



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Dr. Chris Gaskins, PSA Krista May, RN Dana King, RN Evalyn Cresecia, and RN Emily Coonfare (not pictured) are all awarded the Citizens Distinguished Service Award for their care of this critically injured person.

Our Journeyman Apprenticeship Training Council has been mostly unchanged since the 1990s. Firefighters Ethan Heigel, Corey Yutzy and Derick Beiler, with the guidance from Lt. Steven Chesshir, rewrote and revamped the manuals. They are now updated with illustrations, hyperlinks and put into a more user-friendly format. Their dedication to improving the department's training for journeymen is outstanding.

The GIS Team works “behind the scenes” to provide the Executive Staff with vital information needed to make us a better and safer department. We arrive quicker to scenes due to their outstanding efforts. They create any and all reports needed to function in the Department at a moment's notice without complaint.

Anytime there is a large scale emergency, you need good leaders to guide you through safely. Assistant Chief David Baugh is one of those leaders. Chief Baugh was instrumental in developing the Incident Action Plan for Columbus Division of Fire. His understanding, leadership, and calm attitude led the Division through this Pandemic. Chief Baugh oversaw the POD staffing model to keep firefighters and officers safe, healthy, and at work. Chief David Baugh is awarded the Distinguished Service Award.

The Fire Chief's Award is given to those who have gone above and beyond, making the Division a better Fire Department than it was before.

Firefighter David Pence developed NFIRS Rescue module quality control and worked with GIS to create new modules for all rescue disciplines for State reporting. FF Pence's continual in-service training for in-charge rescues and rescue techs is second to none.

Firefighter Michael DeFrancisco's tireless effort in investigating and arresting arsonists has led to less fires around the City and keeping Columbus Firefighters safer while on the street. FF DeFrancisco is the same Firefighter today as he was on his first day at the Department. His tenacious work ethic, ability to see the “big picture”, always assisting where needed, and willing to go the extra mile in every scene makes him a great Firefighter and Investigator. Upon his retirement next year, he will leave a huge hole that will be difficult to fill.

Lieutenant David Gerold was instrumental in starting the Peer Support Team for the Columbus Division of Fire. His willingness to help make Columbus Firefighters healthier, physically and mentally, linking any and all members who need help to the right resources is exceptional. Lt Gerold's willingness to lend ear to anyone to assist with mental health has aided in several firefighters getting the care they need.



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Lt. Steve Saksa proved invaluable in many ways during the initial stages of Covid-19. Lt Saksa provided intelligence and guidance to the Executive Staff while on his own time. He then volunteered to change his work assignment in order to become a personal aide to Acting Assistant Chief Baugh, leaving Engine 14 and working a 40 hour shift. During this time of service for Covid-19, Lt. Saksa developed a new division daily routine to highlight prevention strategies. He additionally led a team to visit every fire station in order to stress the importance of adhering to prevention strategies and provided valuable feedback to the General Staff as to what was working, what was not, and guidance for help with getting buy-in for our personnel.

Captain Steven Riley assisted with training during Covid-19 and visited fire stations checking in on the welfare of crews and answering questions about PODding. Captain Riley built relationships between fire crews, officers, Dr. Lowe, and Executive Staff to better communications during this Pandemic. FF David Pence, FF Michael DeFrancisco, Lt David Gerold, GIS Team, Lt Matthew Parrish, Lt Stephen Saksa, and Captain Steven Riley are all awarded the Fire Chief's Award.

Lt. Matthew Parrish was instrumental in developing the RREACT/ Spark Team. His Grant writing has built the RREACT and Spark Team to 17 members to serve the community. Lt Parrish serves on multiple committees alongside the Columbus Department of Health for the betterment of society. He works with Columbus Police to develop relationships to better serve Public Safety and the community.

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In the morning hours of March 7, 2019, a call was received of a person in the water. It was determined that a suspect who had tried to steal a car was chased by police and jumped into a pond to elude capture. The pond was partially iced over and very cold. Firefighters arrived and tried to talk the person out of the pond to no avail. After being in the four foot deep pond 30-40 minutes, the person became weak and eventually slid under the water. DART 2 rescued the person from the freezing water and brought him to shore, where he was cared for and stabilized. The person was transported to the hospital.

This was an extremely tense situation that was handled with perfection. Captain John Kaltenback, Firefighters Pat Ike, Jordan Irwin, Galen Troyer, and Richard Parks of Mifflin Township Fire are awarded the Public Safety Award of Excellence. Columbus Fire Captain Scott Krummel, Lt. Stuart Mack, Lt. David Blair, Lt. Jeff Blair, Lt. Bill Ross, Firefighters Bryan Owens, Damon Hilderbrand, Albert Cates, Jarrod McClain, Brian Osowski, Bryan Knights, Michael Powell, Anthony Tinnermann, Chris Morrison, Damian Santos, Nathan Dunmoyer, Donald Hollis, and Adam Gottfried are awarded the Fire Service Award of Merit.

Water rescue is a part of the Division of Fire's services to the community; whether it be from flood, suicide attempts, swimming accidents, or swift moving water. The Division's boat rescue program has specially trained firefighters for just such events. However, Firefighter Jeffrey Ross noted that the motors on our inflatable boats were stalling during shifting or in heavy currents. This is a potential risk to the lives of our firefighters. Ross took the time to research the motors, make multiple phone calls, and talked to many vendors to discover the motors in use were not meant for inflatable boat rescue. Ross's research revealed that Evinrude was the motor we should be using for our rescue boats. Ross put together a presentation for the spec change and the Division moved forward with the recommendation. Firefighter Jeff Ross is awarded the Fire Service Award of Merit for his dedication, persistence, and perseverance in getting the boat rescue program operating safely.

Engine 7 and Medic 7 were called to the home of a 30 year old female with trouble breathing. What they found was a woman in an upstairs bedroom gasping for breath. There were also three children present, ages 4, 5, and 7 that firefighters took care of until CPD arrived. Medics worked to stabilize the patient while also trying to calm the children. This was not an easy call. It seems that everything that could go wrong did, and the crew had to devise alternate plans on the fly. Everyone on the crew worked together, stayed calm, and performed as a cohesive unit. The patient was eventually transported to the hospital, where unfortunately she passed away. The crew returned to the station and talked about the run, trying to find a way they could have done something different, what they could have done better, what they would do next time. Lt. Jared Wadsworth and Firefighters Carey Shaffer, FF Marcus Waldrop, FF Matthew Straub, FF Robert Herrel, and FF Jacob Suslowitz are awarded the EMS Award of Merit.

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Columbus Fire Dispatchers take a lot of calls for a lot of different reasons. When a call comes in for Cardiac Arrest, Dispatchers are a literal lifeline for the patient. Firefighter Michael Weier took a call stating her brother was having a heart attack, then the call was disconnected. Firefighter Weier immediately dispatched resources to the address on a possible cardiac arrest. Weier then called back the residence and spoke with the caller, instructing her how to perform CPR. She performed the actions until firefighters arrived to take over. Due to Weier's quick actions and calm instruction to the caller, the caller's brother survived his cardiac arrest. Firefighter Michael Weier is awarded the Fire Service Award of Merit.



Columbus Firefighters generally work a 24 hour shift with 48 hours off; however, they are truly never "Off Duty". Firefighter Shaman Sharma, while at home, received a call from a friend who said they had someone visiting from out of town who was having some symptoms and asked if he could speak with her. Firefighter Sharma agreed. The female stated she was experiencing a sharp pain in her side that increased in frequency. Sharma stated that 911 should be called and she should be examined at a hospital. Firefighters Michael Kalinowski, Jessica Hessel, Gary Garnet, Steven Snider, and Matthew Groom arrived at the residence and examined the woman. She was very embarrassed, thinking it was a crick or gas. They calmly talked to her, urging her to go to the hospital to get checked out. After hearing their reasons, she agreed to go to the hospital. This turned out to be the best advice she could have received as she was diagnosed with a pulmonary embolism. Firefighter Sharma's training and willingness to help, even when off duty, and the medics attention and empathy for the patient is an example of the phenomenal firefighters and medics at the Columbus Division of Fire. Firefighters Sharma, Kalinowski, Hessel, Garnet, Snider, and Groom are awarded the EMS Award of Merit.



Columbus Fire Tactical EMS respond with Columbus Police when serving search warrants, just in case officers need medical attention. On this day, while serving the search warrant, gunfire was heard from inside the residence. Firefighters Brad Hess and Jason Bliss positioned themselves to receive a possible patient. A few moments later, multiple gunshots were heard and a police officer dove out the front door onto the grass. Other officers drug the downed police officer a little way and then returned to aid those still inside. FF Hess and FF Bliss observed blood coming from the officer's side and neck. Knowing this could be a critical injury, Firefighters Hess and Bliss entered the hazardous area to pull the injured officer to cover and begin medical care. Not only were they working diligently to save the officers life, they were also reassuring the other police officers that they were doing everything they could for their fellow officer. They transferred the care of the officer to another medic who transported him to the hospital and continued their duties at the scene. Their quick thinking, tactical training, and calm demeanor saved this police officers life. Firefighters Brad Hess and Jason Bliss are awarded the EMS Award of Merit.



Columbus Firefighters are always taught to be prepared for anything. Medic 817 and Engine 17 were dispatched on an unconscious overdose, which has unfortunately become a common run in Columbus. *Firefighter Awards continued page 16.*

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The responding crews found a CPD officer performing CPR on a patient who was in cardiac arrest. Medics took over, applying all their expertise on the patient to get her stable. The event was taxing; everything that could have happened did. It was difficult to apply the medication necessary to the patient. However, through excellent training, they were able to transport the patient to the hospital where she was taken to the cath lab and survived her heart attack. Firefighters Derrick Beiler, Daniel Byrnes, Brandon Leidel, Bryce Mason, John McFarland and Lieutenant Robert Cooper are all awarded the EMS Award of Merit for their excellent work in saving this patient.

Every fire run is different. Firefighters were dispatched to a fire at 1200 East 21st St. where they found smoke coming from the home. While searching the home, they found a male on the floor. Firefighters Daniel Kelly and Zach Simpkins rescued the victim to safety. CPR was begun by Firefighters Dan Pineda and Dan Blanchard as the patient was in full arrest. Lt. Robertson was alone in the house, fighting the fire in a back bedroom, and was able to extinguish it. The cohesive unit worked with flawless perfection to put out the fire, rescue the victim, and keep all firefighters safe. Captain Jeffrey Dhume, Lt. Steve Robertson and Firefighters Zach Simpkins, Daniel Kelly, Robert Pineda, Kevin McNamara, Jeremy Buckholtz, Dan Blanchard, Jake Hageman and are all awarded the Fire Award of Merit for their actions.

Sometimes, everything you trained for in a fire occurs in one incident. Firefighters arrived to a fire at 4783 Bourke Road. While assessing the situation, an explosion occurred on the second floor. Bystanders were yelling that people were still trapped inside. One firefighter noticed two victims laying in the yard, but people were still yelling about others being trapped inside. Firefighter Dylan Ulry noticed an extension ladder laying in the yard so he grabbed it and put it to the window, rescuing one victim from inside the structure. Using the homeowner's ladder and fire truck ladders, a scaffolding was created, allowing the other victim to be rescued. The roof was collapsing at this time and rescue had to be swift. Everyone was rescued safely. Lt. Nathan Young, Firefighters Curts, Morgan Jones, Kyle Haertling, James McAllister, Christopher Hiles, Windle, and Lt. James Moore, and Battalion Chief Daniel Vicha are awarded the Fire Service Award of Merit. Firefighter Dylan Ulry and Firefighter Patrick Foley are awarded the EMS Award of Merit.

The Fire Chief's Award is given to those who have gone above and beyond, making the Division a better Fire Department than it was before. The following are those who are deserving of this award. Firefighter David Pence developed NFIRS Rescue module quality control and worked with GIS to create new modules for all rescue disciplines for State reporting. Firefighter Pence's continual in-service training for in-charge rescues and rescue techs is second to none.

Although this year's awards were not conducted at a banquet hall, they are no less important to me and the Division. I am so proud of not just those receiving awards, but all the firefighters and officers that make up the greatest fire department in the nation. I thank each and every one of you for the support you have shown me in my transition from Assistant Chief to Interim Fire Chief. You have made what is a stressful time easy.

Follow the Division's Facebook page to see more 2020 Firefighter Award photos.





Fire Cadets continued from page 3

Fire Cadets endure two days of cardio training and two days of strength training every week plus a HIIT (high intensity interval training) workout to “gas them out,” Finnegan said. Tuesdays are devoted to running the five story fire training tower and Friday is usually the Deck of Cards or a basketball game.

“The Fire Cadet program attracts athletic minded individuals. The current classes include ex-college football players, college soccer players, a MMA boxer and even a professional bowler,” Finnegan said.

“They come from a diverse background of athletics, so it makes my job easier as a trainer. Some are straight out of high school; they had their gym classes and all, but some of them haven’t had anything structured, so our weight training can be challenging for them as some of our exercises are new to them. I have to break it down for them,” Finnegan said.

“When it’s PT time, we are ALL OUT for 50 minutes. Everyday. The intensity and duration is very structured, not a free-for-all, so that’s a shock to the system for some of them,” said Finnegan.

Because the Police Cadets had no physical requirements in the program, Finnegan knew she couldn’t put them through a typical exercise session with the visitors. Thus the Deck of Cards workout.

“I wouldn’t say it’s easy, but easy to understand and straight forward. It’s fun, too. It wasn’t too strenuous for most of them,” Finnegan’s ultimate training goal for the Fire Cadets is to pass the Civil Service Firefighter Mile strength, stamina and agility tests, which mimics the actual physical requirements of real-life firefighting tasks.

In November, 19 Fire Cadets took and passed the Civil Service Firefighter Mile endurance test, the last of three tests giving by Civil Service. After passing the Mile, Cadets are banded in the 70th, 80th and 90th percentile and start the background check and polygraph testing, then oral board interviews and psychological and stress testing.

“The thing about the Firefighter Mile, whether you have strength or not, it’s about technique. It’s body mechanics and muscle memory of doing those things,” said Finnegan.

“A lot of guys find out the hard way that the hose drag is not all about strength. When you get that tension after you make that first turn with the hose, a lot of guys end up on their backs. The same thing applies to the tire strike. Some can complete it with enough strength, but for most of us it takes proper technique to pass that test,” Finnegan said.

“The blind hose crawl is another test that’s firefighting specific. Those hoses are all tangled up, and if you’ve never done it before, you’ll likely end up on the wrong hose or your time will expire before you figure it out,” Finnegan said.

Finnegan says she enjoys teaching in general, and has high expectations for her first class of Fire Cadets.

“We hope the Cadets don’t graduate after two years in the program. It’s our hope that they all will earn their certifications and acceptance into our Fire Recruit training programs while they are Cadets,” said Finnegan.

Fire Cadets will work to earn state certifications as Firefighter I and II, Emergency Medical Technicians Basic (EMT-Basic), health care provider CPR AHA, AHA first aid training, National Incident Management System (NIMS 100, 700) and HAZ-MAT Technician Certification.



Photos top: Fire Cadets and Police Cadets perform a two-mile run at the Fire Training Academy fitness course. Left: Firefighter Elizabeth Finnegan leads a joint Police/Fire Cadet class through the “Deck of Cards” workout. Finnegan graduated from Capital University where she awarded All-American honors in track and field.



VOLUNTEERISM

The Covid-19 pandemic forced the cancelation of many holiday community service and volunteer efforts for the Division in 2020. But members of the Columbus Fire family joined together this holiday season to adopt a pair of families who have been coping with childhood cancer this year.

Mary Taylor, a former elementary school teacher and wife of Columbus Fire logistics manager Ron Taylor, started the Friends of Faith Foundation 2014 to help families overwhelmed financially and emotionally by childhood cancer. Mary Taylor named her foundation after a former student who died in 2011.

“She didn’t want to be forgotten, so we started a scholarship in her honor. The foundation began after we began to understand the need out there,” Taylor said.

The mission of the Friends of Faith Pruden Foundation is to raise awareness of childhood cancer and the gold ribbon, provide financial and emotional support to oncology patients and their families at Nationwide Children’s Hospital, and award post-high school scholarships to students in central Ohio.

In the United States in 2020, an estimated 11,050 new cases of cancer will be diagnosed among children from birth to 14 years, and about 1,190 children are expected to die from the disease. Although cancer death rates for this age group have declined by 65 percent from 1970 to 2016, cancer remains the leading cause of death from disease among children.

The most common types of cancer diagnosed in children ages 0 to 14 years are leukemias, lymphomas, brain and other central nervous system tumors, according to the National Cancer Institute. Taylor currently has about 75 families on her list, all referrals from social workers at Nationwide Children’s Hospital.

“We call them our 12th floor kids, because all the children in oncology are treated on the 12th floor of the hospital,” Taylor said.

The Friends of Faith foundation is a year-round effort to help families struggling with the financial burden of medical treatments and by funding memorable family experiences for critically ill kids and their siblings.

“The need out there is overwhelming, so we focus on childhood cancer and do our best to support the families with basic things like groceries other expenses. We focus on experiences, like family theme parks and destinations to create good memories for the whole family. But with Covid-19 shuttering most activities, it’s been hard for us,” said Taylor.

Taylor arranged for the Columbus Firefighters Foundation and staff from the Emergency Services Bureau to adopt a Delaware County family of three children. Their oldest son was diagnosed at age four and died at age 7 this year.

Taylor also arranged for the Columbus Firefighters Foundation and a group of Bureau Administrative Assistants to adopt Catherine, 5, and her two younger siblings. Catherine was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia a year ago. Because of Catherine’s extreme vulnerability to common germs and infections, her mother was forced to quit her job to care for her and her siblings at home. Catherine’s dad was out of work much of the year because of Covid-19 business closures. The kids from both families provided lists of gift items they’d like to receive, so no guesswork was involved for the CFD adopter groups.

All of the gifts were delivered by Christmas Eve.

“We don’t really pay medical costs, we just provide comfort items,” explained Taylor, who has been heading the foundation since 2014 after her own health issues forced her to leave the teaching profession.

“We are a 100 percent charitable group with no paid staff. Our seven member board is made up mostly of college friends,” said Taylor.

If you’d like to make a donation to Friends of Faith or learn more about the organization, visit <https://www.faithprudenfoundation.org/>

Photo captions left: Adopted Family Team is Lt. Steve Chesshir, Beth Cottrell, Firefighter Cory Yutzy, Geneva Bourne, Mary Taylor, Susan Johnson and Karen Buckley.

Photo right: Adopted Family Team is Mary Taylor, Firefighter Andrew Horton, Beth Cottrell, Firefighter Timothy Davis, Assistant Chief Tracy Smith and Lt. Steve Chesshir.

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- U.S. Citizen
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