



THE NICKEL LINE

Caring for our Firefighters for over 100 years!



REGISTER TODAY FOR THE SAN DIEGO 9/11 MEMORIAL STAIR CLIMB!

SUMMER 2023 EDITION

Visit us at
www.firefighteraid.org

San Diego Fire Relief Association
10509 San Diego Mission Road
Suite F
San Diego, CA 92108

Table of Contents

Our Dedicated Staff	2
Board of Directors	3
Letter from the Secretary	4
SDFRA Membership Updates	5
Member Benefits	6
Retired Corner	7
Last Alarms	8
FirefighterAid Updates	9
SD911MSC Flyer	10
Fire Family Services	11

Our Dedicated Staff



Marisa Nunes
**Manager of
Operations
SDFRA**



Andrew Garcia
**Member
Engagement &
Claims
Representative
SDFRA**



Brittany Sipe
**Member
Engagement &
Claims
Representative II
SDFRA**



Susan LaNier
**Accountant
SDFRA**



Sara Berns
**Executive
Director
of SDFRA &
FirefighterAid**



Amber DeBartolo
**Community Programs
Coordinator
FirefighterAid**

Board of Directors



Brandt Truver
President



Kelly Doan
Vice President



John Brubaker
Treasurer



Jeff Williams
Secretary



Dan King
Board Director



Arnell Garcia
Board Director



Sean Brambir
Board Director



Kenneth Barnes
Board Director



Ben Vernon
Board Director



Corey Teng
Board Director



Geof Cummings
Board Director



Jon Handley
Trustee



Lorraine Hutchinson
Trustee



Jeff Carle
Trustee

We're dedicated to you, your families, your profession, and our community.

Letter from the Secretary



SDFRA Members and Families,

I hope everyone is having an outstanding summer! My family and I went on a road trip to Northern California and the Oregon Coast in June. We were able to see the Redwoods, Oregon Dunes, Umpqua River, and Crater Lake. We lucked out on the weather and everyone enjoyed seeing that part of the United States.

San Diego Fire Relief Association

San Diego Fire Relief Association (SDFRA) has been hard at work since our last newsletter. In March we were invited to partner with the Local 145 to provide lunch to the new fire recruits. This is an awesome opportunity to educate and recruit new members. We would like to send a huge thank you to our SDFD Training staff at NTC for all of their hard work. In addition, Brittany Sipe joined the SDFRA as our Member Engagement and Claims Representative II, to assist with the Medical Claim Reimbursements, programs, and communication with the members. If you have inquiries about the reimbursement process or claims, do not hesitate to contact Brittany; she will gladly assist you. She can be reached at (619) 281-0354 (Option 1) or by email at bsipe@sdfra.org.

FirefighterAid

FirefighterAid (FFAid) is preparing for our 11th Annual San Diego 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb which will be held on Sunday, September 10, 2023, at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront. It is now crunch time as we are less than two months away from the event. This is our largest fundraising event of the year, and I invite you to take part in this living Memorial. If you have questions regarding registration, fundraising, or the event itself, the Event Coordinators, Sara Berns and Amber DeBartolo, can be contacted at (619) 281-0354 (Option 3) or by email at firefighteraid@gmail.org.

Notice of Election

In the coming months, we will have a few positions on the Board of Directors that will be available. Our board is composed of eleven directors: nine active directors, two retired directors, and three trustees. We ask that you be on the lookout for letter of interest notices that will be sent to every station, and an eblast to the current email that we have on file.

What are the duties of a Board Director?

Being on the Board of Directors for the SDFRA has been one of the most gratifying parts of my time in the fire service. The board and staff are extremely dedicated to providing assistance to our fire family, and it has been a privilege to serve on this board. Our mission is to serve the members of the SDFRA and I feel honored to have the opportunity to help our members in their time of need. Directors serve a three year term, and during that period make decisions on policies, goals and objectives, and assure that the organization is reaching its goals and fulfilling its mission. Each month, we have a board meeting to discuss the current events and activities going on at SDFRA and FFAid. In addition to the monthly board meeting, directors will be placed on one of the four sub committees which are executive, policy, finance, education and recruitment. At the end of each year, we hold a Strategic Planning Session to review our achievements from the previous year and set new goals for the upcoming year.

If you are interested in becoming a Board Director or have any questions, please email me at jwilliams@sdfra.org.

Thank you and have a safe summer!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeff Williams".

Jeff Williams, Secretary

SDFRA Membership Updates

By: Marisa Nunes

Happy Summertime SDFRA fire family,

We hope you enjoy much-needed time outdoors and catch some sunrays this summer. As you will see on page 7, there are two cool opportunities to have some fun in the sun, whether you are an active or retired firefighter. The La Jolla Kayak and Concept Surf Shop are giving back to our San Diego Fire Relief Association (SDFRA) members in hopes that you can unwind outdoors with their rentals. Please share with us about your experiences if you do happen to get in on these two fun outdoor activities. The details are listed with each offer. If you have additional questions, please contact Marisa Nunes at (619) 281-0354 (Option 2) or by email mnunes@sdfra.org.

Recently, we sent out station mailers and two emails to the membership as we plan to update, firefighters and beneficiaries. We aim to provide the Death Benefit to those important to you once we have been notified. We know this is not something one enjoys filling out, but we must have this on file to seamlessly provide the benefit and assist your loved ones. If you DO NOT fall in the following bullets, please scan the QR code below or contact our team to complete this request.

- Academies 89th-96th
- Filed a completed beneficiary form in May-August of this year
- You had a recent change of who you would like the benefit to go to

Follow the steps provided to complete the beneficiary form. Please note that it is a fillable document if you are planning to use a computer, and if you are utilizing a mobile device you will need to print out the document and fill out the information by hand.



- Scan the QR code or visit our website <https://www.firefighteraid.org/membership-claim-portal/>
- Click on the "SDFRA Members" Tab
- Download and fill out the "Beneficiary Form"
- Save as PDF
- Email or mail in attention to Marisa Nunes

Frequently Asked Questions By the Membership

1. **What is the main entrance code for the main gate to the building?** 1907.
2. **If I have never activated my Apptivo online member portal how do I go about doing so?** You can either call Brittany Sipe at (619) 281-0354 (Option 1) or email her bsipe@sdfra.org to receive the activation link.
3. **If the system is not accepting my PDF document what should I do?** Try saving your document as a jpeg.
4. **How do I update my address, dependent(s), phone, and email?** You are more than welcome to update this information with our team by phone or email.
5. **If I am retiring, what must I do to continue as a member of the SDFRA?** Contact our team for us to answer questions and to provide the retirement documents. It is important to note that retirees have 90 days from their retirement date to decide if they would like to continue their membership. Dues can be requested from San Diego Employees Retirement System (SDCERS), San Diego Firefighters Federal Credit Union (SDFFCU), or a personal check.

Member Benefits

By: Marisa Nunes

La Jolla Kayak

Since 1994, La Jolla Kayak has been a family owned and operated local rental store. This is the place to go if you are looking for something fun whether it be snorkeling, kayaking, or bike tours. La Jolla Kayak has generously offered all San Diego Fire Relief (SDFRA) members \$10 off each double kayak rental and \$5 off every single kayak rental. If you would like more information or to book your next adventure, scan the QR code below or visit <https://www.lajollakayak.com>. It is important to note that guests must show their valid SDFD city ID for active and retired firefighters and that they are an SDFRA member.

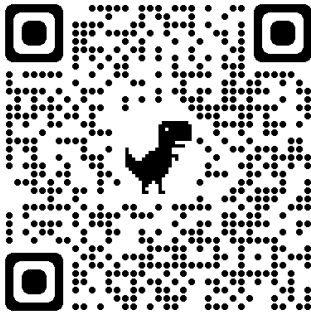
La Jolla Kayak

2199 Avenida de la Playa

La Jolla, CA 92037

Monday – Sunday (9 AM – Sunset)

(858) 459-1114



Concept Surf Shop

Located in Encinitas, the Concept Surf Shop is ready to help you enjoy your next outdoor H2O session with your loved ones and friends. All SDFRA members can receive up to 20% off all surf lessons, merchandise, and rentals. It is important to note that guests must show their valid SDFD city ID for active and retired and that they are an SDFRA member. For more information, visit <https://conceptsurfshop.com>.

Concept Surf Shop

215 W D St.

Encinitas, CA 92024

Monday – Sunday (10 AM – 5 PM)

(760) 753-6870



By: Jon Handley



Hello Fellow SDFRA Members and Families,

As I sit here writing this article, the sun is out and shining brightly for the first time in months! Welcome summer!

I have been asked "What is a Trustee for SDFRA and FFAid?" The trustee position is a volunteer that serves on the Board of Directors as an advisory non-voting member of the Board. The position was formed in 2017 when retired Battalion Chief Greg Donnelly took on the role. At that time, Arnell Garcia was the sole board member representing all retirees. Arnell has been the "face" for retirees since 2012 and continues to be the outstanding representative to this day! As we all know, in the last several years we have had an incredible number of our fellow SDFRA members and firefighters, both retired and active, pass away or become seriously ill due to cancer. In the latter half of 2017, I volunteered to assume the role as an additional trustee. With two trustees, the burden was somewhat lifted, or at least eased, from Arnie's shoulders. Shortly after, an additional board member position was created to represent the retirees. Retired Assistant Chief Ken Barnes has graciously filled that position.

Today, we have three retirees that volunteer their time and expertise as Trustees retired Assistant Chief Jeff Carle, retired Deputy Chief Lorraine Hutchison, and myself. There is a lot going on with our members, and as a team we are there to serve in the best manner that we are able.

Several years ago, one of the goals for the SDFRA was to become a "one stop shop" for Relief members and their families. Our aim was to give assistance in times of need. That is a huge vision! It takes a lot of effort to get there and it is quite an extraordinary thing to have the community we do, and the support our team offers. We feel very privileged to support our family of firefighters both active and retired in any way we are able.

Cancer Awareness and Prevention Program

Two programs that we have helped to sponsor are the Cancer Awareness Prevention and Protection (CAPP), and the Fire Family Services (FFS). Both of these programs have grown from a clear awareness of just how devastating the work we do and have done can be and has been on our bodies and our psyches, and the challenges that we and our families face as a result. The CAPP program is a multi-faceted approach toward creating a cancer-free environment in the fire service. Safe work practices include clean air, clean body, clean gear, and an enhanced awareness of just how affected we are from contaminated substances that we all have been exposed to. Please check out the video developed on this program on our website: <https://www.firefighteraid.org/cancer-awareness-prevention-program-capp/>.

Fire Family Services

FFS was developed as a result of firefighters and their families coming forward looking for assistance with emotional issues they were facing. In the past, families suffered in silence while loved ones found various coping mechanisms that were no longer effective. FFS provides resources and education, which has proven to be very effective. Check out the complete program at <https://www.firefighteraid.org/fire-family-services/>.

Thank you for all you do! Stay strong and safe!

Retired Deputy Chief Jon Handley



Last Alarms

By: Arnell Garcia



Please take a moment to recognize the firefighters below as their legacies live on within our fire family and the firehouse.

RET. ENGINEER, BRUCE H. CLARK
LAST ALARM MARCH 23, 2021

RET. CAPTAIN, FRANK REA
LAST ALARM APRIL 12, 2023

RET. CAPTAIN, PETER KOPF
LAST ALARM APRIL 12, 2023

RET. ASSIST. CHIEF, GEORGE K. GEORGE
LAST ALARM MAY 4, 2023

RET. BATTALION CHIEF, HOWARD CROSBY
LAST ALARM MAY 5, 2023

RET. CAPTAIN, ROBERT C. WHEELER
LAST ALARM MAY 13, 2023

ACT. CAPTAIN, DERRIN AUSTIN
LAST ALARM MAY 14, 2023

RET. FIREFIGHTER, GEORGE ALEXANDER
LAST ALARM JUNE 1, 2023

RET. ENGINEER, DONALD RUSSELL
LAST ALARM JUNE 3, 2023

“WE HONOR THE NOBLE TRADITIONS OF THE FIREFIGHTER BY CARING FOR THEM AND THOSE THEY LEAVE BEHIND.”

FirefighterAid Updates

By: Amber DeBartolo



FirefighterAid (FFAid) has started 2023 off strong thanks to all of our sponsors and supporters. We are so grateful to everyone who has supported us, and we are looking forward to some exciting events this fall! If you are on social media and would like to follow all of our special events and projects we can be found on Instagram at **@sandiegofirefighteraid** and Facebook at **FirefighterAid**.

In May, we had the first annual Motors for Minds car show. We want to thank Engineer Justin Loftis for all his hard work putting this event together and securing sponsorships to get it off the ground, as well as the generous sponsors who made the day a phenomenal success. This event took over a year and a half of planning and brought in over \$20,000, which will go to FFAid's mental health programs and grants. Justin, your drive to provide for

your fellow firefighters does not go unnoticed. We are already working with Justin to plan for next year, and we look forward to growing this car show as an annual event.

Aging Heroes

Our Surviving Spouses met up for a lovely brunch at Maggie's Café in Kearny Mesa to kick off summer. We all enjoyed the delicious food while the surviving spouses shared stories of their firefighters and their loved ones. Sara introduced Brittany, a new face to the San Diego Fire Relief Association (SDFRA) organization and thanked everyone for getting together to connect. These women have the kindest hearts and are passionate about getting involved and helping our fire family. Not only does the group meet for 3-4 social events a year but they have also helped with putting together Valentines goodies to those that live near and far, as well as attended our special events throughout the year.

CAPP

Our digital Cancer Awareness and Prevention Program (CAPP) campaign has been running all summer (hopefully, you have seen our videos on Instagram!), and we have received thousands of views on our Clean Air, Clean Gear, and Clean Body informational videos. Thanks to everyone that has helped by liking, commenting, and sharing! We also recently completed a full CAPP in-person training for National City and Bonita Fire Departments about Cancer Prevention and how you can make small daily choices to significantly impact your health and fellow firefighters' health.

2023 San Diego 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

The 2023 SD911MSC will occur on Sunday, September 10th, at 8 am at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront. We are excited to implement feedback from last year and make this our best event yet. Registration opened in late May, and is halfway sold out, so if you still need to register, visit **www.sandiegostairclimb.com** and sign up ASAP. Fundraising from this event supports all our programs throughout the year. Our Top 5 Fundraising Teams will serve as the Honor Teams. Each Honor Team has a powerful significant meaning. The Honor Teams will be announced during the opening ceremonies, will receive their preferred climb time, and will represent a symbolic event on 9/11.

Having one of the top five spots is a privilege. The spots are based on the amount that the team raised as a whole, no matter the size of the team. If you would like fundraising tips you are more than welcome to contact our team for help or reference our social media outlets. Happy fundraising and we cannot wait to see you in the stairs!

Save the Dates

San Diego 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb, Sunday, September 10th, 8 am @ San Diego Hilton Bayfront

Buffalo Bills MNF 9/11 Fundraiser, Monday, September 11th, 4 pm @ The Local PB

SDFD Mustache Madness, Thursday, October 19th, 5 pm @ Mavericks Beach Club

Firefighter Fundraiser Brunch, Saturday, October 21st, 10 am @ Firehouse PB

22ND
ANNIVERSARY



BENEFITING



SAN DIEGO 911 MEMORIAL STAIR CLIMB



SEPTEMBER 10, 2023 / HILTON BAY FRONT

1 PARK BLVD. SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

BEGINS AT 8AM

SPONSORED BY:



SIGN UP:



SANDIEGOSTAIRCLIMB.COM

Fire Family Services

By: Betsy Salzman



I have served with the San Diego Fire Rescue Department since 2019. With a desire to assist responders following critical incidents and traumatic life events, I focus on a trauma-informed approach based on Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). I hold a master's degree in Theology, serve as a chaplain with U.S. Probation in San Diego, and am a volunteer with the Trauma Intervention Program of San Diego. I deployed to Hurricane Irma in 2017, and the Mosquito Fire in 2022 as a member of the SDFD Peer Support Team.

In addition, I am a handler to Facility Dog Genoa, one of SDFD's first Crisis Response Canines (CRC). Genoa and I received over 120 hours of training specific to our fire personnel with critical needs. Visiting fire stations, assisting peer support with debriefs and diffusions, dispatching to critical events and fires, meeting with families, and attending community events, we serve our personnel and families, with community, and partnering agencies. Genoa has a special way of "speaking and attending," helping to normalize first responders' lives by bringing peace and calmness to any situation. She allows personnel to find the right words to speak during very tough times while also giving permission to those who do not wish to speak.



**SAN DIEGO
FIRE-RESCUE
CHAPLAIN**

The goal for chaplains is to regularly network with personnel, building a solid foundation of trust and friendship with the hope that we can be effective resources, whether for daily questions, frustrations, or critical events, both on and off the job. Confidentiality is crucial to the role, allowing chaplains to focus on the tougher effects in the lives of first responders. Further, the chaplain's role is to provide peace and

presence, and Genoa is vital in accomplishing this. She is always welcomed with open arms and snuggles when greeting personnel, family, and community members creating the ability to connect and communicate. For more information for Health and Safety resources, please call **(833)-SDFD-HSO (733-3476)** as we are available by phone 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

By: Karen Deppa, Principal, PilotLight Resilience Resources, LLC

I am the daughter of a volunteer firefighter who suffered from depression. When I got my master's degree in Applied Positive Psychology, I was determined to help teach emergency responders to prevent behavioral health issues in honor and memory of my dad. My PilotLight Resilience Resources co-principal, Mike Donahue, has over 45 years of emergency service in the suburbs of Washington, DC. He is also passionate about preventing or mitigating behavioral health problems that can sideline emergency responder careers after watching friends prematurely retire out with debilitating psychological injuries.

In May, with sponsorship from FirefighterAid (FFAid), Mike and I delivered a virtual class we developed called "Respond with Resilience™ Psychological Wellness for Emergency Services First Responders." This class teaches research-based skills to build psychological resilience based on the science of positive psychology—the study of what makes life most worth living." This class is based on three pillars of resilience that are crucial to the emergency responder community:

- Using Flexible, Optimistic, Realistic, and Thorough (FORT) thinking to recognize unproductive thought patterns and choose healthier ways of thinking about even the most difficult situations;
- Developing Coping Capacity, deploying internal and external resources to boost your confidence in and ability to deal with adverse circumstances; and
- Strengthening Social Support to help improve relationships among colleagues, family members, and others you interact with regularly.

Here is a practice you can start today to improve your psychological health: Each night before bed, think of Three Good Things that happened that day. No matter how small or insignificant they may seem, write down (or think about) what happened and how you felt about them. This will help you focus on the positive aspects of your life and less on the negative, annoying things that occur day to day. Learn more about Respond with Resilience at <https://pilotlightresilience.com>.



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