



FD12

WE'RE HERE FOR LIFE

SPRING 2010

www.FD12.org



Blood Drive

FD12 Holds Blood Drive
for Leukemia Patient

IN THIS EDITION:

Our Responsibility
a firefighter's perspective on the job

FD12 battles
blaze at popular
Covington
restaurant

The history of
The Thin Red Line



FROM THE CHIEF

Firefighting isn't just a job. It's a calling. Even in our field, we joke with one another that we are all slightly crazy to seek a career that involves running into – not away from – burning buildings. The truth is, it's not crazy at all. What we all crave in this field isn't the excitement. Rather, it's the opportunity to save lives, make people's lives better, and to serve others.



Fighting fires isn't all excitement. When they're not responding to calls, our firefighters are doing mundane tasks like washing fire trucks and mopping the floors in our fire stations. We have high standards for ourselves, and we try to project those standards – day in and day out, both on duty and off duty.

When we do respond to a fire call, we sometimes have to enter a burning building to help others escape, to seek air and light and life. When we arrive, it is vital that we are trusted. Our uniform and our badge mean something to us that goes beyond 24-hours shifts responding to your needs.

In this edition of our quarterly newsletter, you'll find a story by one of our Fire Operators that makes this point quite well. After 9/11, the firefighting profession became known as an heroic occupation. But we don't really think of ourselves as heroes at all. We're just here to make things better for you – to protect you, rescue you if necessary, and even to protect your money by keeping insurance rates low. No matter what tasks we're performing, whether putting out a fire, pulling accident victims from cars or changing the batteries in your smoke detector for you, the goal is always the same: We're here for life.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

By OPERATOR CLAYTON L. CAWYER

I was fresh out of rookie school, only been to a few fires. On one of my off nights my family and I went out to eat at a popular local restaurant. It was cold so I was wearing my department coat with all my badges and patches on it. The restaurant was busy, so as we waited for a table a little girl came up to me and started staring at me. She looked to be about 4 or 5 years old. I smiled and said hello, then she said, "You're a hero, I can tell."

It was that moment that I realized the great responsibility we all carry as firefighters. We are not only charged with public safety, but also with upholding an image. It's part of our job to help people believe that there still are heroes in this world.

Someone once said that a hero is an ordinary person that overcomes an extraordinary situation. I don't think firefighters are ordinary people; we are unique in the careers we choose, and every day we face what most people would call extraordinary situations. We train for those situations, making them seem commonplace for us. Granted, each call is unique, but there are usually common factors we can identify that allow us to safely overcome whatever obstacles we encounter.

Firefighters have been viewed throughout history as the quintessential, all-American heroes. We have an obligation to uphold that image every day. To make sure that every child, parent, friend and neighbor grows up and lives their life believing in that image, believing in us. From the fires we fight, the extrications we



perform and the Band Aids we place on skinned knees, every time we come on duty we need to be at the top of our game, always ready to roll and deliver the best assistance we can, no matter what the call.

This also applies to off-duty. As you can see from my story, you never

know when someone is watching, or when the opportunity will present itself to make a difference in someone's life.

We must always be aware of the many obligations we have accepted, the traditions we have agreed to uphold, and the image we portray. The world needs heroes today more than ever. We need to do all we can, every day, to teach people how to stay safe so hopefully we will never have to save a child from a burning building. But the people we are charged with protecting need to believe that when they call us, we will never let them down.



The Thin Red Line

The emblem of the "Thin Red Line" was developed by the Apex, NC, Volunteer Fire Department in 1999 to show respect to fallen firefighters and to those who protect our lives and property every day.

When firefighters respond to a call – and even when they make a commitment to become professional or volunteer firefighters – they place their own lives second to those they serve. This "Thin Red Line" of heroic men and women

Landmark fire shows cooperation



(c) St. Tammany Fire District 12

On March 1, the landmark South China restaurant burned down. While tragic, the incident was also a perfect example of how FD12 works with other Fire Dis-

tricts to respond to events.

Almost every Fire District in St. Tammany Parish sent personnel and equipment to assist in battling the fire at South China. Because of limited water supply in the area, tanker trucks were needed to contain the blaze. Because finally conquering the fire and securing the scene

took several hours, additional personnel were vital. In all, 75 people and 25 emergency vehicles responded. Fire Districts

that weren't needed at the scene provided their equipment to staff FD12 stations so you were never without fire protection service and coverage.

Cooperation in times of public need is more important than any boundaries that delineate the fire districts or municipalities. All firefighters take their jobs seriously and do what must be done to protect you and your property.

For more information about Mutual Aid among Fire Districts, visit:

FD12.org

Firefighters hold blood drive

St. Tammany Fire District 12's motto, "We're here for life," took on new meaning Saturday, February 27, as firefighters held a blood drive for a local man in desperate need.

Marshal Packer was a lifelong blood donor himself until being diagnosed with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia a few years ago. CLL is a form of cancer that affects the bone marrow, where blood is produced. Marshal has a rare and aggressive form of CLL, and has now developed an autoimmune disorder that has further delayed his cancer treatment. In the meantime, he needs a consistent, safe blood supply to stay alive.

Marshal's wife Susan and sons Andrew, Nick and Brad, appealed to their local heroes at FD12 for help, and FD12 answered the call.

"We protect lives and property every day in short-term, dangerous situations," said FD12 Chief Darrell Guilott. "To have the opportunity to preserve life in another way is a tremendous blessing for us."

More than 30 units of blood were donated during the drive, exceeding expectations. Susan and Marshal were both impressed by FD12's community-minded spirit.



FD12 Chief Darrell Guilott and Susan Packer



who risk life and limb every day to keep us safe is all that separates us from more serious danger on a daily basis.

Similar to the "Thin Blue Line" that honors public servants in law enforcement, the Thin Red Line can be seen on numerous license plates, T-shirts and other personal items worn or carried by firefighters, their families, and citizens who just want to show support.

Those products are available at any number of websites and retailers. FD12 does not profit from the sale of Thin Red Line emblem material, but our firefighters appreciate the show of support wherever it is displayed.



FD12

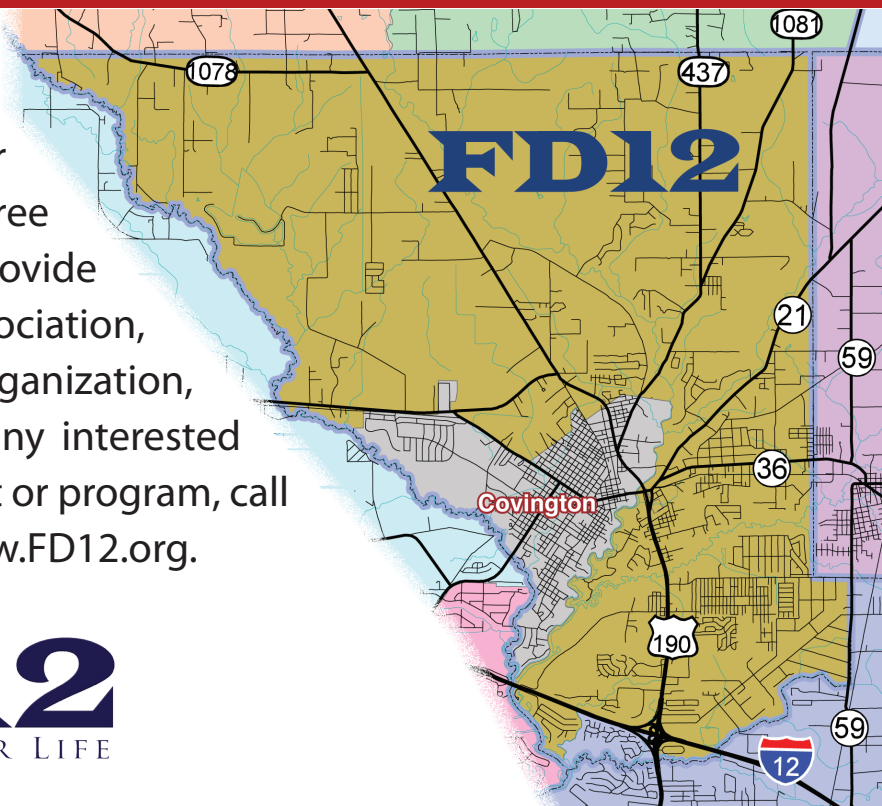
WE'RE HERE FOR LIFE

19375 Hwy. 36 | Covington, LA 70433 | 985-892-5161

PRST STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Custom Mailer

Did you know...

The men and women of FD12 don't have to wait for an emergency to visit you. We will gladly install smoke detectors or change batteries for you, or give you a free home safety inspection. We will also provide programs for your Homeowners Association, Scouting group, church or other civic organization, and offer tours of our fire stations to any interested family or group. To schedule a home visit or program, call 985.892.5161, or contact us through www.FD12.org.



FD12

WE'RE HERE FOR LIFE