Friends of Firefighters 2021 Impact Report
Providing Free Mental Health and Wellness Services to the FDNY Community Since 2001
In 1872, 199 Van Brunt Street was the home of the first all-paid unit of the Brooklyn Fire Department. Strategically located in the growing manufacturing district of Red Hook, the new two-bay, two-story brick firehouse opened with Engine 2 in one bay and Ladder 1 in the other. This “double house” was designed to accommodate apparatus, several horses, and full-time firefighters who lived upstairs.

In 1960, Engine 2 and Ladder 1, re-numbered Engine 202 and Ladder 101, relocated to their current home around the corner, on Richards and Seabring streets.

Friends of Firefighters moved headquarters from Columbia Street to Van Brunt Street in 2009. With help from more than 400 firefighters, we restored the Ladder 101 half of the building to serve as our main office and a place for firefighters to build connections while obtaining resources and support.
Dear Friends,

In the 20 years since 9/11, the FDNY has been steadfast in their responses to fires, medical calls, and other emergencies. Although the world has changed unimaginably since 2001, our mission has not; Friends of Firefighters continues to assist when our Bravest and their families need help.

This year we celebrate two decades of service to the FDNY community. As we reflect upon our triumphs, we remain sharply focused on what is to come. Much like the blazes our firefighters battle every day, the pandemic has altered our lives forever. On top of COVID-related stressors, we are seeing an increase in suicides, 9/11-related illnesses and repeated traumas of the job. It is only by working together to maintain the sanctuary that is Friends of Firefighters that we can continue our mission.

Thank you to our many partners who donated money, time, and expertise to ensure the continuation of our services in 2021. We are grateful for those who understand the challenges of a first responder, the worries of the families, and the very real threat of injury or death.

To our FDNY members and their families, thank you for the privilege of allowing us to serve your community since 2001.

We're still here.

Nancy Carbone
Founder & Executive Director
Available in-person and online

“Thanks to our dedicated, volunteer yoga instructor, Crystal Fenton, we’ve been offering free, live yoga and core strengthening classes online via Zoom for our FDNY community.

The yoga class has been a great balance of strength, endurance, relaxation, and flexibility. Crystal takes the time to break down sequences, offer explanations, and tailor movements to different levels.”

- Active FDNY Firefighter
We've been taking care of the people of New York for a long time... it's nice when somebody takes care of us.

-FDNY Captain, Anonymous

On the Arm Breakfast

Established in 2003 by the late Tony ‘Cat’ Catapano, our beloved volunteer Pete Calascione (Retired FDNY, Engine 202), carries on the tradition of hosting a monthly breakfast for active and retired FDNY members and their families.
An estimated 37% of firefighters are suffering from PTSD. 55% of clients were firefighters (active & retired). 45% of clients were family members (active, retired, or deceased). Prevailing concerns were relational conflict, anxiety, and depression.

The Gary Sinise Foundation (GSF) has been a valued partner of Friends of Firefighters for close to a decade. Through the years, GSF has made donations to support our mission, from the generous grant we received in 2018 to bolster counseling services, to sponsoring our Firehouse Kitchen Talk program, to supporting our outreach efforts throughout the pandemic with drop-off pizza deliveries to FDNY firehouses.

We are proud to have their name attached to our Mental Health Program; The Gary Sinise Foundation Center for Wellness in honor of John Vigiano is named for our and Gary’s dear friend, John, a former Marine and decorated FDNY captain who lost both of his first responder sons on 9/11.

Gary Sinise Foundation Center for Wellness in Honor of John Vigiano

3,120 counseling sessions in 2021

50% increase in sessions

45% increase in clients

55% of clients were firefighters (active & retired)

45% of clients were family members (active, retired, or deceased)

An estimated 37% of firefighters are suffering from PTSD
Firefighters are 3 times more likely to complete suicide than to die in the line of duty.

20th Anniversary Program
Sponsored by the Gary Sinise Foundation, the UFA, and the First Responders Children's Foundation

Acupuncture
Personalized Reiki Sessions
Pilates, Yoga & Core Strengthening
Children’s Art Workshop
Adult Painting Classes
Drop-In Peer Support
Ease Your Pain Workshop
Navigating Illness Workshop
Weekly Firehouse Kitchen Talk
Weekly On the Arm Breakfast
20-Minute Mental Health Tune-Ups
Extended Office Hours

Thanks to our sponsors, we were able to provide six weeks of supplemental support services during the 20th anniversary of September 11th.
Despite challenges presented by the ongoing pandemic, we made sure that all 218 FDNY firehouses across the 5 boroughs of NYC knew that we were still there for them.

“Thank you so much from the bottom of our hearts... Your kindness, generosity, and support during our time of need is overwhelming. We hope to one day return the love and support.

- FDNY Family
Community Appreciation &

South Carolina pig farmer Tank Jackson traveled to NYC to prepare a meal for the members of FDNY Engine 3/Ladder 12.
Fundraising

• Sakhi & Co. •
NYC consulting agency Sakhi & Co. coordinated appreciation dinners with a rotating roster of NYC chefs who wanted to say thank you to the FDNY community.

• NYC Still Rising •
Hosted by Jon Stewart and Pete Davidson, NYC Still Rising was a comedy show at Madison Square Garden that honored the resilience of NYC. The show featured a star-studded cast of comedians teaming up to raise money for 9/11 charities, including Friends of Firefighters.

• Being Buscemi: An Eve with Steve! •
Hosted by actor/director Kevin Smith, Being Buscemi was an intimate benefit held at Smith’s podcast theatre, SmodCastle. Smith interviewed actor/producer Steve Buscemi about his film, TV and stage career, and experience as a former FDNY firefighter.
Steve McGuinness of Goldman Sachs hosted a Q&A with Steve Buscemi, Michael Barasch, and Bridget Gormley to learn more about how Friends of Firefighters can be a lifeline in the ongoing battle with emerging 9/11-related illnesses.

Dust

In partnership with Olive Productions, producers Bridget Gormley and Gerry Sievers premiered their documentary, Dust, highlighting the ongoing toll of September 11th and the lingering effects of 9/11-related illnesses and cancers. Following the screening, an after-party was held to benefit FoF.

Deaths on 9/11 2,974  Related Deaths since 9/11 4,343

Approximately 63,500 first responders have been diagnosed with 1 or more medical conditions related to 9/11.
Athletes from all over the world donated a grand total of $50,000 to support FoF.

Fire Velo National, a non-profit cycling club of active and retired firefighters, raised money for Friends of Firefighters during their Ride for America, a 40-day bicycle ride from LA to NYC.

Fire Ireland designed a Dublin Fire Brigade 20th Anniversary of 9/11 Challenge Coin, with net proceeds going to Friends of Firefighters.

Runners, Bikers, Climbers | Seattle, San Diego, CA-NY, FL-NY, France, Germany, Ireland
Impractical Jokers star Brian Quinn was the emcee for our 3rd Annual Firehouse Chili Cook-Off fundraiser held at Brooklyn’s Pig Beach.

1st Place E 91
2nd Place E 4 / L 15
3rd Place E 202 / L 101
Jimmy & Food Karma Projects continually choose Friends of Firefighters as Community Partner for their annual culinary events, including Brisket King, Rib King, and Pig Island.
Your partnership is the reason our FDNY community has the resources they need.

We hope you know how appreciated you are.

Thank you for supporting Friends of Firefighters.
Help ensure that we are always here for our Bravest.

Scan our QR Code to discover different ways to give:

www.friendsoffirefighters.org