Our Mission

Friends of Firefighters is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization that provides independent, confidential, and free mental health counseling and wellness services to active and retired FDNY firefighters and their family members.

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All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.
Dear Friends,

September 11, 2001 was a day that brought true horror and fear, yet simultaneously illustrated how New Yorkers band together with love and support for strangers. It is this spirit of compassion and kindness that has guided the work of Friends of Firefighters for over twenty years.

As the city emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, we cannot forget the mental toll it has taken on our firefighters. The psychological costs they endured while responding to an unprecedented number of calls have resulted in an increased need for our services. Compared to 2021, we saw a 59% increase in counseling sessions, and 71% increase in the number of clients. In 2022, we conducted over 3,500 counseling sessions and accepted over 180 new clients.

We’re honored to be a trusted resource of New York City’s Bravest. To meet this increased demand in services, we’ve expanded our administrative staff, programmatic offerings, and hired eleven new counselors since 2020.

Friends of Firefighters was founded, quite simply, by a mother whose instinct was to support firefighters as they grappled with an unfathomable loss in the wake of September 11th. Twenty-two years later, with the help of hundreds of firefighters, donors, and supporters, I am so proud of what Friends of Firefighters has become. Our team is stronger than ever, and the need for our services continues to grow well beyond our expectations.

Thank you to the many partners who donated their time, resources and expertise to ensure the continuation and growth of our services. We are grateful for those who understand the challenges of first responders, the worries of their families, and the ever-present threat of injury or death.

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

We’re still here.
Post-traumatic stress and depression rates among firefighters have been found to be as much as five times higher than the civilian population*

*Ruderman Family Foundation

Since 1880, 1,831 US firefighter suicides have been reported with 95% occurring since 2000**

**Actual numbers are higher, as the Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance (2023) estimates reporting at only 60%.**

An estimated 37% of firefighters are suffering from post-traumatic stress**

**What We Do**

An estimated 37% of firefighters are suffering from post-traumatic stress**

**Why We Do**

Post-traumatic stress and depression rates among firefighters have been found to be as much as five times higher than the civilian population*

*Ruderman Family Foundation
Prevailing concerns in 2022 were anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, and relational conflict.

A recent survey of 1,000 US firefighters demonstrated that at some point in their careers:****

- 47% considered suicide
- 19% made plans for a suicide attempt
- 16% went through with a suicide attempt

** Firefighters are three times more likely to complete suicide than to die in the line of duty***

3,572 counseling sessions in 2022

- 45% of clients were family members
- 55% of clients were firefighters

*** Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance
**** Florida State University
33% average year-over-year increase in sessions provided between 2018 and 2022.

221% total increase in sessions provided between 2018 and 2022.
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.

We are projected to conduct over 4,600 counseling sessions by the end of 2023.

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

Services and programs are for individuals, couples, groups, and families.

- Counseling
- Life Coaching
- Peer Support
- Support Groups
- Acupuncture
- HeartMath
- Reiki
- Additional Wellness
- On the Arm Breakfast
- Firehouse Kitchen Talk
- Financial Guidance
- Info and Referrals

Available in-person and online
Acupuncture Services at a Glance

48 clients
128 sessions

52% active firefighters
22% retired firefighters
26% family members

- Nausea
- Arthritis
- Migraines & Headaches
- Multiple Sclerosis
- PMS & Menstruation
- Muscle Cramps, Aches & Spasms
- Indigestion & Gut Problems
- Back, Neck, & Joint Pain
- High Blood-Pressure
- IBS & other Digestional Disorders
- Stress & Anxiety
- Depression
- Insomnia
Motorola Solutions generously donated funds to cover 178 outreach hours.
Our Outreach Coordinator, Emmett White, visited more than 130 firehouses in 2022.

Traveling throughout the five boroughs via public transportation, Emmett delivered informational material to over 2,000 firefighters.

NYC has **218 firehouses** that are organized across **9 Divisions**. Within the divisions there are **53 Battalions**, holding **197 Engines**, **143 Trucks**, **8 Squads**, **5 Rescues**, **1 HazMat Unit**, and **3 Marine Companies**.
We are honored to present to each class of probies at the FDNY Fire Academy.

Each graduating class learns about the numerous stressors associated with the job, and the free-of-charge services we provide.

Outreach doesn’t just mean firehouse visits.

Our staff and board members attended multiple FDNY events throughout the year!
Spearheaded by Slipknot’s frontman Corey Taylor, The Taylor Foundation raises awareness of post-traumatic stress, and provides resources and financial support to nonprofits that are actively providing meaningful and creative assistance to those affected by PTS.

The Taylor Foundation’s generous donation covered the cost of 75 counseling sessions.
We proudly celebrated our 20th birthday in downtown Manhattan on June 14th.

Located at Suspenders Bar & Grill, our party brought together some of our first supporters, along with our newest partners.
The Robert Irvine Foundation made a generous donation of $25,000 which offset the cost of almost 600 counseling sessions in 2022.

We are grateful for our partnership with the Robert Irvine Foundation, the Ferguson Showrooms team led by Jennifer Klaus, and our neighbors around the corner at Engine 202 & Ladder 101.
35 FDNY Cooks
15 FDNY Houses
5 Winners

1st Place ENGINE 6
2nd Place ENGINE 239
3rd Place ENGINE 202

PEOPLE’S CHOICE

1st Place ENGINE 6
2nd Place LADDER 8
3rd Place RESCUE 1

JUDGE’S CHOICE

5th ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF
Thank you to Jimmy Carbone & Food Karma Projects for choosing Friends of Firefighters as a long-time Community Partner for their annual culinary events, including Brisket King, Rib King, and Pig Island.
Cantor Fitzgerald Charity Day

For 10 years, we have been invited to bring an ambassador to join Cantor Fitzgerald on the trading floor to conduct trades with clients.

Since 2012, Steve Buscemi has attended this event with our team. Friends of Firefighters ambassadors have included Vincent Piazza, Tony Lo Bianco, and others.

With the support of our 2022 ambassador, Brian Quinn, this tremendous day of charity brought $25,000 to Friends of Firefighters.
Friends of Firefighters was a Charity Partner for the TCS New York City Marathon. Our eight amazing runners ran 26.2 miles through all five boroughs, and raised $22,278.20
Past Honorees

2010
Steve Buscemi
Jennifer McNamara
Skipp Suduriah

2012
Eve Bucci
Sean Belnick
David Caputo
Todd DeMayo
Kevin Gallagher
Tom King
Brad Lander
Ralph Mandia
Jimmy Miller
Bobby Muccio, Jr.
Bobby Muccio, Sr.
Telly Tellefson

2014
Doug Borths
FDNY E205 / L118
Daniel Nigro
Amy Simmons
Terry Winter

2016
Jerry Coffin
FDNY Pipes & Drums
Edie Lutnick
Mary Alice Stevenson
Captain John Vigiano

2011
Chief Michael Burke
Pete Calascione
Tony Catapano
Elizabeth Crowley
Captain Liam Flaherty
Billy Hodgens
Daniel Nigro
Kenny Pogen

2013
Jay Abel
Marian Fontana
NoLa Fire Department
Operation Gut & Pump
Gary Sinsie
Tim Van Patten
Jay Whitmer
Tommy Woods

2015
Jo Andres
Chris Barber, L22
Noam Freedman
Annie Freedman
Chief Edward Kilduff
John Mills, L25

2017
Deepa Balakrishnan
Paul "Signs" Buegemann
Karen Donnelly
Chief Vincent Dunn
FDNY Rescue 2
Gregg Wolpert

2019
Jimmy Carbone
Kia Carbone
Tony Catapano, E202
Amy Freeze
John Fuchs, L101
Eric Howard, L4

Friends of Firefighters

Acknowleging 20 Years

Our Annual Fall Gala is our largest fundraiser of the year.

This special evening helps raise the necessary funds to support our ongoing mission.

The Fall Gala brings together past supporters with new friends to make connections and forge relationships to sustain our mission.

We are grateful to each of the 73 individuals, firehouses, and independent organizations that we have honored over the past 20 years.
2022 was yet another a year of uncertainty. With decreased capacity, distance requirements, and various new health measures in place, we were faced with a number of restrictions that we had not previously encountered.

We were privileged to honor Brian Quinn, Peter Calascione, Bridget Gormley, FTL, and Zuri Group. With the help of our guests, sponsors, and donors, we raised $87,022.37
Thank you to our partners, in-kind donors, sponsors, and ongoing supporters.

Amundi US
Anna Maria Geehan
Apple Bank
Brian Ahearne
Brian Cohen
Brotherhood Ride Inc
Cauldwell Wingate
Charlie DelBocco
Chris Rock
Cynthia Hochswender
Daniel Walsh
David Blake
Duane Morris, LLP
Eileen Overbough
FDNY Steuben Association

Gary Sinise Foundation
Geico Philanthropic Foundation
Gerald Coffin
Gregg Wolpert
Janet Belluisci
Jason Calacanis
Jimmy Carbone
Kendra Scott LLC
Kenneth Hege
Mark Boisi
Marilyn Vetter
Matthew Pintchik
Motorola Solutions, Inc.
Nathan Marini
New York Braver Foundation

Nicholas Visconti
Pledgling Foundation
Raymond Baccala
Richard & Susan Schlueck
Robert Getru
Schulte Roth & Zabel
Simon Industries, LLC
Stanley Stahl Management Inc.
State of Mississippi, City of Biloxi
Stern, Tannenbaum & Bell LLP
Steve Buscemi
The Apatow-Mann Family Fdn.
The Lanza Family Foundation
The Taylor Foundation
Tim and Wendy R. Van Patten

Brauch, McCurry, Salzman & Penson
Dade County Association of Firefighters Charities, Inc
Ingram, Yuzek, Gainen, Carroll, & Bertolotti, LLP
Schlesinger, Gannon & Lazetera, LLP
The Steven Buscemi and Jo Andres Charitable Fund
Uniformed Firefighters Association
Unity Building Security Inc.
Vector Management
Yoga Bees are Beautiful LLC
Zeckendorf Development LLC

Barasch, McGarry, Salzman & Penson
Dade County Association of Firefighters Charities, Inc
Ingram, Yuzek, Gainen, Carroll, & Bertolotti, LLP
Schlesinger, Gannon & Lazetera, LLP
The Steven Buscemi and Jo Andres Charitable Fund
Uniformed Firefighters Association
Unity Building Security Inc.
Vector Management
Yoga Bees are Beautiful LLC
Zeckendorf Development LLC

Council Member Julie Menin
Council Member Robert Holden
Council Member Shalana Hanif
Council Member Rita Joseph
Council Member David Carr
Council Member Joseph Borelli
Council Member Alexa Aviles
New York City Council Speaker Adrienne Eadie Adams
Thank you for supporting Friends of Firefighters.

Your support is the reason why New York City’s Bravest have a place to go for help.