

THE METRO INSIDER...



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GRAND TRAVERSE METRO EMERGENCY SERVICES AUTHORITY

Fire Prevention Week - With Special Honors ... By Meredith Hawes

October 5-11, 2014 marked 92 years of the observation of "Fire Prevention Week". Established in 1922 to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire, each year fire departments from across the country work to promote an important fire safety message to residents in their communities. This year's message is "Smoke Alarms Save Lives. Test Yours Monthly."

Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department has a long list of community visits and activities throughout the month of October in observance of Fire Prevention Week, however the most memorable may be the kick-off event this year at the Home Depot on Saturday, October 4th. Smoke alarms were front and center, and many of our community partners were present to aid in the fun and educational aspects of the event; North Flight EMS, Cherryland Electric, The American Red Cross, The Grand Traverse Sail and Power Squadron, The Coast Guard Auxiliary, The Grand Traverse Sheriff's Department, TART Trails, and HANDDS to the Rescue. We are appreciative of both their time and expertise!

This year we were fortunate to have new community guests join us as well, and with their help we were able to highlight some of the other skills our firefighters possess, beyond fire suppression. Three individuals and their families shared their stories of emergency situations that left them relying almost solely on the medical training and proficiency of our firefighters, and the outcomes of those emergencies have changed their lives forever.

One of those stories shared was that of the Tester family whose 3 year old daughter Elonica was pulled unconscious from a lake early this summer. Reviewing the 911 tape of the call will send a shiver down anyone's spine as the listener hears the babysitter and the 911 dispatcher working expeditiously together to resuscitate "Ellie" while our Metro Firefighters and North Flight crews were on their way. Thankfully Ellie was resuscitated that day, made a full recovery, and celebrated her third birthday just a week later.

We are grateful to Tester family for joining us at the Fire Prevention Week Kick-off Event at Home Depot, and for sharing their story and their beautiful daughter Ellie with us. See Katie Tester's story below and for more stories visit our web site at www.gtmetrofire.org



A MOM'S STORY..... By Katie Tester

Words cannot begin to describe my feelings in this situation. God's hand in the day of the accident is so evident. To say that we are thankful that our babysitter Audrey knew CPR and was prepared in the face of an emergency is a gross understatement. I have read other's words lots of times in situations like this, but it's true "you never think it will happen to you" ..and I never thought something like this would happen to my daughter. Fortunately, when it did happen, God had an amazing and prepared gal ready and in position. I remember leaving that morning to go to my work appointment, just saying good-bye like it was another normal day...never knowing that less than an hour later Audrey would use what she had learned to save my daughter's life.

Since that day I have gone back and gotten re-certified in my CPR. I also asked my current babysitter to be certified. How ridiculous would it be for me to be unprepared should a situation like that ever happen again? CPR is something everyone should know, and hopefully never use.

The Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department was amazing and we are so thankful for their quick response time and for doing what they do. Their response time was amazing and the care that they gave to us was the best.

What I would like people to take away is this: Become trained in CPR. Know what to do if you are faced with an emergency situation. It's like wearing your seat belt- you don't put it on every day knowing you will be in an accident...but you wear it every day nonetheless. Learn CPR, not because you know you will need it, but because if by chance you ever do need it - it could be the difference in the outcome for your story.

Message from Chief Patrick J. Parker

On October 18, I had the privilege of handing out longevity, military recognition, and achievement awards to nearly 20 of our firefighters. I have had some time to reflect since then and I am so pleased that we are a department that has longevity. With longevity comes experience and knowledge. These people are the mentors for our future firefighters. Hopefully our mentors have had good role models themselves! Our first longevity awards go to those with five years of service. Those are now hopefully seasoned veterans with many experiences under their belts. Remember that the probationary and firefighter candidates are watching how you act. That behavior is how they will act when they have five years under them. I was pleased to recognize those who served our country in the military. They will now have recognition pins with the branch of which they served. If you see a military pin, thank them for their service! Our people do such extraordinary feats on a daily basis. We can't recognize everyone for doing their jobs. However, from time to time the call was so special that a person or a team must be singled out. Those occasions will be recognized by a unit citation followed by acts of valor, merit or heroism. Stand by for more on those recognition awards.

We have talked in past issues on the expectation of extraordinary customer service each and every call. We need to raise the bar on our professionalism. Yes, emergency services is a profession! Part of that is to look the part. Recently I've seen members who are wearing uniforms that should have been thrown out years ago. Part of being professional is to be clean shaved and groomed, with clean and well-kept uniforms along with boots or shoes shined. Before you go on

shift next time, look in the mirror and ask yourself if this is the person you would want responding to your mother or grandmother. If not, do something about it. If you need new uniforms, please order new uniforms!

We just completed the third leg of our health, wellness, and fit for duty evaluations. Physicals tell us if you are medically fit for duty. Wellness evaluations tell us how physically fit you are for duty, and the fit for duty tells us if you can actually function on the fire ground by replicating actual fireground activities (darn Chief Flynn beat me by 1 second this year). Physical fitness is part of the core competencies. We are occupational athletes and must train and be prepared for such. It appears that most improved from last year and felt their physical fitness efforts paid off. Let's never forget that if we truly are a professional firefighter, we lose the right to be unfit. We must always be cognizant of our mission to each other and our families so "we all go home!"

Until next time, Be safe out there!



Chief Parker

3rd Annual Recognition Awards Ceremony

Congratulations to the following recipients of awards:

FF Josh Sprenger — 2014 Metro Firefighter of the Year

FF Wayne Mervau—30 years of service

FF Rick Worm—20 years of service

FF Josh Morgan—5 years of service

FF Mike Courson—5 years of service

FF Daren Mansfield—5 years of service

FPB Meredith Hawes—5 years of service

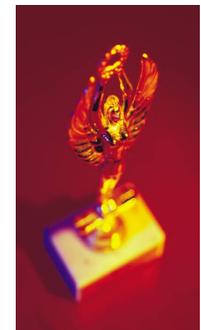
FF Mike Lince—25 years of service

FF Chris Childers—20 years of service

FF Bryan Ferguson—5 years of service

FF Anthony Hoffman—5 years of service

Lt. Tim Newton—5 years of service



Contributed by: Beth Pryde, GT Metro Wellness Coordinator



S.M.I.L.E.

Did you know that there is a science behind smiling? Did you know that this science suggests that our lives can be positively affected by just having a smile on our face. The fact is, researchers have proven that a very specific type of smile known as the **Duchenne smile** brings health benefits more powerful than any other smile. In layman's terms, a Duchenne smile is a genuine smile with mouth curved upward and eyes squinted. It is the "authentic showing of joy".

"the Berkeley researchers concluded the Duchenne smile is so effective that 95% of people who use it experience authentic happiness. That means only 5% of people are able to fake happiness with this smile."

Smiling has been shown to reduce **S**tress, improve **M**ood, enhance **I**mmunity, create **L**ongevity, thus creating more positive **E**nvironments both at home and at work. Additionally smiling can improve success in relationships and general life experiences, reduce blood pressure, as well as improve overall feeling of life contentedness.

The simple act of smiling releases endorphins and serotonin, brain chemicals that help fight symptoms of illness and combat depression. There is literally a fireworks show of brain activity that genuine smiling sparks.

"According to many experts, smiling may not only be an outward manifestation of a happy feeling. It may actually be able to cause a happy feeling."

"theory basically states that in a state of emotional neutrality, putting a smile on your face can tip you in the direction of a positive feeling."

All in all, science and research has shown that having a positive attitude, seeing situations in a positive manner, and looking at others in a positive light, is the healthier way to go through life. You will be sick less often, less severe, and recover faster. You will be more successful in carrier and professional goals, as well as happier and more content in personal relationships. Putting on a genuine smile will just make you feel better; about yourself, your surroundings and the people around you. So scrunch up that nose, squint those eyes and turn that frown upside-down. In the words of the late Phyllis Diller " A smile is a curve that sets everything straight."



New Payroll System Coming Soon!!!

To All Metro Employees:

Metro is moving our current payroll system over to a new company where all employees will now be able to login to a program to enter timesheets, print paystubs, update tax information, and so much more. There is even a mobile phone app that will allow you to submit timesheets. More importantly, we will have so many more options with reporting in Human Resources. Our target start date will now be November so please keep an eye out for mandatory training on this program. All employees will be required to utilize it. As a department, in order to save money and the environment, we will be moving over to a paperless payroll system as well. This means all employees will be moved over to automatic deposit or be issued a debit card. More information will be forth coming in the next month so please stay tuned for this system change.

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