

MARCO ISLAND FIRE RESCUE FOUNDATION STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS 2018

By Steve Stefanides

2018 was a special year for the Marco Island Fire Rescue Foundation and the island itself. We had just come off the challenges presented to our community by a gal named Irma in the fall of 2017, and the island and all the organizations, businesses and residents continued to struggle dealing with the aftermath of that storm throughout 2018.

However, I am proud to report to you that the state of our Foundation is stronger than ever thanks to your support of our efforts.

Marco Island Fire/Rescue and the community as a whole stood tall during that time period...and our Fire/Rescue Personnel made us all proud during this last year of recovery.

MEMBERSHIP

Our membership has stayed strong during the year due to your commitment to our Mission and to the professionals who make up the Fire/Rescue Family.

THE FOUNDATION'S MISSION

Our mission, simply put is to accomplish the following:

To encourage and promote citizen awareness of community safety.

To recognize and honor fire /rescue employees and citizens for their contributions to the welfare of the community.

To help assist in promoting fire/rescue programs such as CERT and the AEDs in buildings.

We are especially appreciative of the support given to the Foundation by the Progressive Auto Group, as they have supported our membership drive each year by insuring our members are able to keep their vehicle shiny and bright because to their generous donation of a free Car/Wash each year with renewal or the purchase of a new membership.

SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL PURSUITS OF OUR PROFESSIONALS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Nothing is more important than the pursuit of education for those that wear the uniform of the department and its staff. In addition to those department members we also assist their families in the pursuit of higher education.

In 2018 the Foundation was proud to support the following individuals:

- Grace Corey
- Joey Byrne
- Andrea Leiner

Those scholarships are made possible due to the generous contributions from several donors and a large fundraiser on our part.

- Those wonderful members of the Island Country Club and their charitable foundation.
- Our own Jim and Allyson Richards who graciously support our educational outreach.
- The efforts of the Foundation members themselves, who years ago, under the watchful eye of Monte Lazarus headed the effort to create the scholarship program while having the proceeds of our annual cruise raffle support the Scholarship Fund.

Today you can find tickets for this worthy cause at the table towards the entrance to help continue this wonderful effort. Foundation Board Members will also have tickets available.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Last year one of our longtime professionals was required to take three months away from his duties with the department to recover from a serious injury.

The Foundation would help him and his family over the financial hurdle that was unforeseen and came about after a previous injury had impacted his department sick time.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Last year we fed 400 hungry breakfast goers at another great pancake breakfast at Station 50. This community event brought together young and aging gracefully adults

with their local department members to view equipment and tour your fire department.

STAN'S RAFFLE EVENT

Over the years we've had the privilege of being granted a Sunday during the season to sell 50/50 tickets at the popular weekend spot in Goodland. Each year through the efforts of Jack Patterson and Dennis Pidherny (alias Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid) and with the help of many volunteers, we've been able to raise necessary funds to continue our efforts to help our first responders.

JERRY ADAMS CHILI COOK-OFF

With 18 chefs as well as the generosity of 20 sponsors and dozens of volunteers this event was a huge success. The event raised \$10K and Foundation donated these proceeds to the Fire Departments of Calloway and Springfield in the Panhandle so as to assist in their recovery due to the catastrophic damage caused by Hurricane Michael. Our Foundation helped to "pay it forward," for the many examples of kindness and friendship shown us after Hurricane Irma.

A total of \$30,000 was transmitted to the members of those two departments who lost everything. The departments' personnel were mostly volunteers and lost everything as a result of Hurricane Michael.

There are numerous other ways that the Foundation reaches out to assist our firefighters and their families, in addition to providing

- Provided financial support to on-duty staff and personnel working over the holidays by supporting their Holiday meal.
- Sponsored CPR/AED training for community members.
- Participated in the Annual Business Expo.
- Manned a booth at the Kiwanis car show.
- Participant in the Police Foundation's Rib Cook off (enjoying 2nd place in the May event.
- Provided and served breakfast at St. Marks wonderful Camp Able for over 100 people
- Toy Drive -The Foundation partnered with Christmas Island Style in a Toy Drive for the same departments in the Panhandle. A special thank you to Tom & Lisa Mann of Naples All Event Party Rental for their time not only delivering but also providing the truck and trailer. A big thanks you to Stan Niemczyk for assisting Tom Mann in the delivery and drive to the Panhandle.

SPECIAL THANKS

Susan Koslovsky has been a huge help in keeping our Foundation Store stock organized along with all the time in selling merchandise at events for us at various events. She represents the wonderful spirit of the residents of our island.