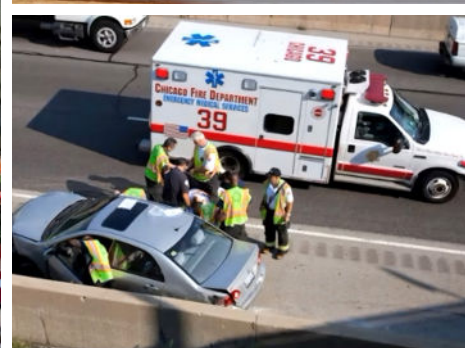




# Chicago Fire Department Foundation



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT





The Chicago Fire Department Foundation 2024 Annual Report is dedicated to all the firefighters and paramedics of the Chicago Fire Department. They put on a uniform each day to protect and serve the residents of Chicago. They give so much and ask for nothing in return.

**They are willing to trade their life for yours at a moment's notice, to give up all of their tomorrows for your today with no questions asked, no hesitation.** If you ask them why, they will tell you they are "just doing their job."

They are truly special; they encounter people on perhaps the worst day of their lives and give nothing but their best. They look at each other and find **strength**, not weakness; **faith in the mission**, not fear; **unity**, not division.

To all the men and women of the Chicago Fire Department, active and retired, who passed away as a result of the years of exposing themselves to the long-term dangers of the job, all while protecting us – **We are forever grateful.**



# Dear Supporters,

Thank you for all your generous support of men and women of the Chicago Fire Department.

Chicago is a city worth protecting, worth keeping safe. The firefighters and paramedics of the Chicago Fire Department are out there every single day of the year to do exactly this.

Rich or poor. South side or north side. No matter faith, politics, or gender – all they see is a human being in need of help.

Our CFD members and our city have been faced with more threats and challenges than ever before. The only way we can continue to do our part – to support the CFD family – is through your financial commitment. We will continue to deliver on the necessary technology and tools required to save lives, and we will continue to provide financial support to firefighters and paramedics in their time of need.

Our goal for the future remains the same – to help Chicago be the most prepared city in America. If recent years have taught us anything, it's that you can never be too prepared. We ask for your continued support of our vital cause – to please join which is making a difference for our city and its citizens.

**We are the Chicago Fire Department Foundation. Supporting those who protect us all.**



## Chicago Fire Department Foundation



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*Chicago Fire Department*



# Founders Award

Tim Crane, President and CEO of Wintrust



We started this honor four years ago to recognize and thank those who have been with us through thick and thin from the very beginning. And there is no other company that fits that description better than Wintrust.

Mr. Crane was recognized for his unwavering commitment to the Safety of Chicago's residents and his years of support to the Firefighters and Paramedics of the Chicago Fire Department.

Since the Foundation was formed Wintrust has been a reliable partner for whatever we needed – whether it be advice, access, ideas, or resources.

Wintrust also was the major funder for the Foundation's Fire Escape Project – a valuable interactive virtual reality home fire safety program for school children.



# 2024 HEROES

## Firefighter of the Year



### FIREFIGHTER EMT Eric Washington

**On the morning of July 9**, FF Washington, upon completion of his tour of duty, was on his way home when he witnessed a horrific accident. While traveling southbound on Lake Shore Drive, he noticed a passenger vehicle traveling southbound in the northbound lane and witnessed a head-on collision between the vehicle and CTA bus. FF Washington immediately exited his vehicle, activated the 9-1-1 system, and ran across numerous lanes of traffic and a median to assess the scene of the accident. FF Washington observed that three occupants were in the vehicle. A front passenger had been ejected through the windshield. The driver was ambulatory and there was one remaining passenger in the back seat of the car. FF Washington attempted to open the doors, but the collision smashed the doors into the vehicle shell. The vehicle was on fire, smoking heavily, and flames were visible from the front end. FF Washington performed an assessment of the damaged vehicles and concluded the only way to rescue the occupant was through the rear door window. FF Washington used his personal utility knife with a center-punch to



break the rear window. As time progressed, the car became engulfed with flames and smoke. FF Washington, under adverse conditions and extreme personal risk, acted selflessly and demonstrated outstanding bravery by extricating and rescuing the passenger out of the back door window. Simultaneously, FF Washington directed bystanders to drag the ejected occupant to a safe distance from the vehicle which was now fully involved in flames. FF Washington exemplifies the absolute best qualities of the Chicago Fire Department – selflessness, courage, and dedication in the face of danger.

# 2024 HEROES

## Firefighter of the Year



FIREFIGHTER EMT

**James Pienta**

FIREFIGHTER EMT

**Jakub Majka**

**At 8:10 in the morning of December 29,** companies were dispatched to a fire at 5200 N. Sheridan Rd. Responding companies were notified of victims trapped on the sixth floor while enroute to the scene. The first companies to arrive found heavy fire venting out of the window of the sixth floor of an eight-story high-rise. The fire companies immediately began making their way up to the fire floor to conduct a fire attack and begin search and rescue operations. As the fire investigation team was deploying their lines and searches began, the Incident Command was notified of several calls for people trapped on the sixth floor. Firefighters were told that a woman was presenting herself from a window on the sixth floor and preparing to jump. LT Chesack immediately split his company into two teams and deployed them. He instructed the Snorkel team to rescue the woman hanging from the sixth-floor window. Two firefighters quickly raised the Squad's snorkel basket to its full length and removed the victim seconds before she was about to jump. LT Chesack and the remaining FFs began their ascent to the fire floor and floors above to search for trapped victims. FF James Pienta and his partner FF Jakub Majka were assigned the fire floor for search and rescue as the LT and another firefighter proceeded to the floor above. FFs Pienta and Majka were immediately met with zero visibility as smoke filled the hallway from floor to ceiling. FF Pienta quickly oriented himself and led a right-



handed search along with FF Majka down the long hallway in an effort to rescue victims. After crawling approximately 75 feet and encountering punishing heat conditions, FF Pienta heard the faint cries of what sounded to him like a woman. He called out to her and continued moving in the direction of her voice. FF Pienta and FF Majka crawled a few more feet and came across the victim, a 28-year-old female that had been overcome from smoke trying to escape her apartment and was lying face down in the hallway. Both firefighters began to remove her from the smoke and heat filled hallway when she became unresponsive. FF Pienta and FF Majka made a few attempts to drag her before quickly deciding to utilize webbing. After placing the unconscious victim in a rescue harness, FF Pienta and FF Majka dragged her to the east stairwell and out of the smoke-filled hallway. They immediately transferred the victim to the care of waiting paramedics. All the companies at this fire performed admirably, however, if not for the quick thinking and courageous actions of FF James Pienta and FF Jakub Majka, there certainly would have been a tragic outcome to this fire. These members acted selflessly and courageously. They have met and exceeded the highest standards and traditions of bravery that the Chicago Fire Department is known for.

# 2024 HEROES

## Paramedic of the Year



### PARAMEDIC FIELD CHIEF Kathleen Kelly

**On August 17 at 6:45 in the morning**, Ambulance 42 was dispatched to 180 N. Franklin St. for a psychiatric emergency. Upon arrival, Chicago Police notified the crew that a person was positioned on the outside on the 13th floor ledge of a parking structure, threatening to jump. Ambulance 42 immediately notified the alarm office, and the call was escalated. Although not dispatched, Chief Kelly decided to respond to the call. The Chicago Police Department (CPD) and Chicago Fire Department (CFD) had vehicle and pedestrian traffic secured on Franklin and a jump bag was being inflated on the side of the parking garage. After a few minutes on the scene, a request was made for a female negotiator to talk with the patient. Without hesitation, Chief Kelly went up to the 13th floor of the garage to assist. Crisis Counselors and Negotiators had not yet arrived on the scene. Chief Kelly knew time was not on their side. Although she had no formal crisis or negotiation training, Chief Kelly had experience learning and utilizing therapeutic communication through her training as a registered nurse. When she arrived on the 13th floor, several CPD officers and members of Squad 1 were standing quite a distance from the patient. Chief Kelly was informed that the individual threatening to jump was 19 years old and her name was Audrey. Several members were attempting to talk with the patient from a distance, but she remained in a seated position on the edge with her legs dangling. Chief Kelly started to slowly approach the patient,



greeted her by name and told her “My name is Kathleen,” and shared that she is the mom of a 19-year-old daughter and two other children. Chief Kelly asked her if she just wanted to talk. After some conversation, the patient began crying heavily, swung her legs around, came off the ledge, and hugged Chief Kelly. She continued to hug her for several minutes and just kept repeating, “I’m just so tired. I can’t do it anymore.” She also admitted to being on the ledge for more than an hour and a half. Chief Kelly kept her arms on Audrey and reassured her that everyone on the scene was there to help as she guided her off the ledge and back to a safe location. Chief Kelly told Audrey she could be taken to the hospital to rest, eat, and have someone to talk to. Audrey remained cooperative throughout the duration of the time she spent with EMS. Responding as a negotiator to a patient “threatening to jump” was not something Chief Kelly had ever experienced in her career with the CFD. Paramedic Field Chief Kelly had no hesitation when asked to step forward and try to convince this patient not to jump. Had it not been for her quick action to engage with this patient and try to reason with her to come off the ledge, this situation could have ended much differently.

# 2024 HEROES

## Firefighter Award of Valor



### FIREFIGHTER EMT

## William Grunde

**On August 18**, Truck 22 was dispatched to a fire in a 21-story high-rise at 421 W. Melrose Ave. Upon arrival, smoke and fire were visible from the 15th floor of the building. Firefighter Grunde and his partner Firefighter Fracek proceeded to the 15th floor apartment to begin search and rescue operations. FF Grunde forced entry to the upper floor of what turned out to be a duplex apartment. He was immediately met with heavy fire and blinding smoke from the apartment below. FF Grunde had to bravely navigate an unconventional layout with zero visibility due to heavy smoke and heat. He quickly started his search when he heard the faint moan of a victim. He had to ascend

a few stairs and maneuver through a maze of furniture and boxes, working his way towards a semi-conscious victim who was two rooms away. He then had to make his way down the stairs to the victim. He located the occupant who was unconscious with his upper body draped over the open window. FF Grunde then dragged the unconscious victim back through the maze of furniture and boxes, up the stairs, retreating from the smoke and intense heat. He was met by other firefighters who assisted in the removal of the victim from the apartment to waiting paramedics. FF Grunde heroically and expeditiously worked his way through a maze and up and down stairs to rescue the occupant without the protection of a hose line. If not for Firefighter Grunde's perseverance and neglect for his own safety, the occupant would not have survived.





# 2024 HEROES

## Firefighter Award of Valor



**FIREFIGHTER EMT**

**Alfredo Martinez**

**FIREFIGHTER EMT**

**Gerald Hall**

**On the morning of Tuesday, January 10,** Truck Company 13 was dispatched to a fire at 2815 W. Byron St. Upon arrival, they encountered a four-story senior living facility. As firefighters entered the building to investigate, FF Alfredo Martinez, and FF Gerald Hall ascended to the fourth floor where they encountered a fire in apartment 401. Truck 13 forced entry into the apartment without the protection of a hose line. Simultaneously, in zero visibility and high heat conditions, Firefighters

Martinez and Hall encountered zero visibility and heat conditions which forced them to the floor. They immediately conducted a rapid primary search quickly locating an elderly female who was found unresponsive in bed. Knowing that flashover was imminent, and time was not on their side, they quickly dragged the victim out of the bedroom and out of the apartment to a safe area in the stairwell. FF Martinez and FF Hall then initiated CPR until they were met by Ambulance 32 and care was assumed by paramedics with the assistance of Engine 124 personnel. Firefighters Martinez and Hall then returned to the fourth floor to continue searching for residents of the apartment and none were found. The victim was transported to Swedish Covenant Hospital and was successfully resuscitated by the time Ambulance 32 arrived. Though she was still in very critical condition, this was a moment of hope for a life saved made possible through the

heroic actions of Firefighters Martinez and Hall. The quick and efficient teamwork exhibited by FF Martinez and FF Hall, and their steadfast commitment to maintain courage under pressure afforded a once helpless victim a fighting chance at survival. FF Martinez and FF Hall epitomize what it means to be a Chicago Firefighter, and their bravery and perseverance in the face of tremendous odds are representative of their selfless devotion to not only the fire service but to the City of Chicago.



# 2024 HEROES

## Firefighter Award of Valor



### FIREFIGHTER EMT

## Mark Reule

**On June 10 at 11 p.m.**, Truck 41 responded to a working fire at 6412 S. Oakley Ave. Upon arrival, they encountered a one and a half story house with heavy fire showing in the rear of the building. Engine 101 led a hose line out to the rear. Firefighter Mark Reule, assigned search and rescue, was notified of a report of people trapped in the home. FF Reule forced entry to the front door and was immediately forced down to his knees from the intense heat and smoke. Knowing someone may be trapped, he advanced into the house at risk to his own safety without the protection of a hose line from the rapidly advancing fire. Conditions quickly worsened inside the home. Despite extreme heat and every sense in his body telling him to pull out of the structure and wait for a hose line for protection, FF Reule decided to push on deeper into the building. During his rapid primary search of the first floor, surrounded by fire, he found a victim between a wall and a couch just off the dining room. The victim was unconscious lying on the ground face up. FF Reule yelled out his locations to his officer and that he was removing the victim to the front door. FF Reule dragged the victim out through intense heat and zero visibility. He was met by LT Sheahan who aided him in bringing the victim out the front stairs. They immediately initiated CPR and medical care until relieved by paramedics on the scene. Neighbors then stated that the victim's



wife was inside. Without hesitation LT. Sheahan and FF Reule, low on air, reentered the home with other members and began searching for a possible second victim. After a negative primary and secondary search, it was determined the wife was not home. However, they pulled out two of the family's dogs which survived as well. FF Reule exhibited exceptional bravery and selflessness under intense conditions, risking personal safety to rescue a resident trapped inside the home. After rescuing the victim, FF Reule returned to the scene to ensure no one else was inside and, in doing so, saved two family pets. Through these courageous actions, FF Reule embodies the very best of the Chicago Fire Department's values and commitment to service.

# 2024 HEROES

## Firefighter Award of Valor



FIREFIGHTER EMT

**Christopher  
Vandorpe**

FIREFIGHTER EMT

**Thomas Barrett**



**On the evening of August 8**, Engines 76 and 44, Trucks 35 and 36, and Battalion 7 were dispatched to a structure fire at 1741 N. Monticello Ave. Upon arrival, they encountered a two and a half story apartment building with heavy smoke and fire. The rear porches of the building were fully involved, and the fire was spreading to adjacent buildings on each side. The crews quickly deployed hoses to get water on the fire and start with extinguishment and protection of the exposed buildings, as well as search and rescue. FF Cervantes and FF Barrett were assigned as the roof team for Truck 35, FF VanDorpe and FF Graber were also assigned as roof team for Truck 36. Truck 35 spotted their apparatus in front of the building and proceeded to raise the aerial to the roof. Through heavy smoke, the team ascended the aerial to the peak of the fire. FF Barrett made his way to the rooftop in preparation for vertical ventilation of the built-up smoke and gasses on the second floor and attic. FF Cervantes followed closely behind FF Barrett up the aerial ladder. As FF Cervantes was making his way off the aerial ladder, he suddenly lost his footing and began sliding down the peak of the building. FF Cervantes' training and instincts kicked in and he hooked the roof's peak with his left arm. As FF

Cervantes tried to make his way back to the peak, he was unable to get his footing and was slowly losing his grip of the roof. FF Barrett noticed and grabbed FF Cervantes to try and pull him up to the safety of the roof's peak. The smoke and heat from the fire were making it almost impossible for FF Barrett to pull FF Cervantes back to the safety of the peak. As FF Barrett struggled to save FF Cervantes from a 30-foot fall to the pavement below, FF Barrett knew he needed more help. FF Barrett called for a Mayday response. As the Mayday response was being called, FF VanDorpe was making his way up the aerial ladder. FF VanDorpe immediately lunged and grabbed FF Barrett who was precariously holding FF Cervantes to keep him from falling off the roof. FF Barrett and FF VanDorpe were able to pull FF Cervantes to safety. These firefighters got FF Cervantes safely down the aerial and into the care of the paramedics awaiting him on the ground. Without the quick thinking, training, and drilling to be proficient at their jobs, the outcome of the incident may have been fatal. FF Barrett and FF VanDorpe fought through adverse conditions, putting themselves at significant risk, to save the life of FF Cervantes. Their performance was above and beyond the call of duty.

# 2024 HEROES

## Firefighter Award of Valor



### CAPTAIN

## John Haring

**At 2 p.m. on February 10**, Truck Company 44 was dispatched to a fire at 1539 W. Roscoe St. Upon arrival, they encountered an occupied two and a half story apartment building with heavy smoke and heavy fire coming from the basement of the building. There was one occupant visible in the second-floor window getting ready to jump due to the heavy smoke conditions on the second floor. Captain Haring was notified by an occupant outside the building that two residents may still be in the building, unable to escape. CAPT Haring immediately ordered his members to raise a ground ladder to the second-floor window where an elderly woman was last seen. He immediately entered the building with FF Herrera, and they rapidly made their way to the second floor to search for the victim that was in the window and anyone else who could still be inside. They entered the apartment with heavy smoke conditions and initiated their primary search. They quickly located the victim who was seen in the window. Conditions deteriorated to the point that removing the victim to safety back through the apartment was not an option. CAPT Haring along with FF Herrera and FF Maloy removed the victim via the ground ladder in front of the building. Once the victim was safe, CAPT Haring and FF Herrera immediately returned their attention back to the fire completing quick and efficient searches on floors one and two.



The conditions changed very rapidly and once it became apparent that an aggressive interior fire attack was ineffective, along with the knowledge that no further savable victims were inside the building, an emergency evacuation was ordered by the Incident Commander. If not for the quick assessment and decisiveness of CAPT Haring, coupled with the selfless actions of himself and his firefighters, the outcome of this fire could have easily turned catastrophic. Their service is a testament to their commitment to the City of Chicago and exemplifies the primary mission of the Chicago Fire Department in keeping with the Department's highest objective, the preservation of human life. Captain Haring is a two-time recipient of the Firefighter Award of Valor.



# Supporting our Members

The Chicago Fire Department Foundation was created to support the men and women who are out there protecting us every day and keeping Chicago's residents safe. Over the last year, we've made great strides in honoring our commitment.



- ▶ We provided support for the six families of the active members who passed this year, also six members and their families battling serious injury and illness.
- ▶ We also provided aid to 26 CFD families with 41 children headed back to school this past year.
- ▶ The Foundation awarded eight scholarships this past year and we will continue to fund the Eileen Coglianese scholarship through the Gold Badge Society. Eileen was a founding member of the Gold Badge Society and a Foundation Board member who passed away in March of 2021.
- ▶ The Foundation was a sponsor of the Charity Boxing Match between the Chicago Fire Department and the Chicago Police Department. This event supports the CFD Gold Badge Society and the CPD Gold Star Families.



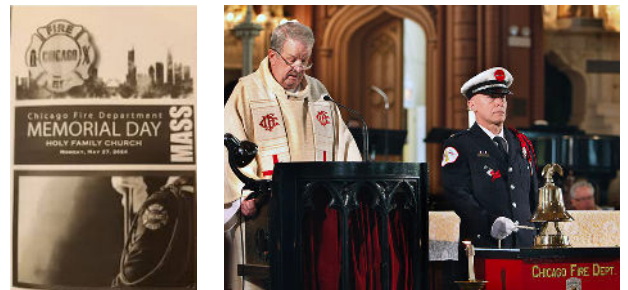
# Supporting our Members



► **We continue to support the men and women of the Chicago Fire Department Pipes & Drums and the Chicago Fire Department Honor Guard.** These dedicated firefighters and paramedics attend countless events on their own time and at their own cost. Special thanks to the CFD Pipes & Drums and CFD Honor Guard members for all they do for CFD families.



► **The Foundation was honored to support this year's 89<sup>th</sup> Annual Chicago Fire Department Memorial Day Mass.** The event honors the deceased members of the Chicago Fire Department and Chicago Firemen's American Legion Post Number 667, Fire Alarm Office, Gold Badge Society, Civilian CFD Members, Fire Insurance Patrol & Civil Defense EPDS members. The service honored the most recent Line of Duty Death members as well as over 145 active and retired members who have since passed away last year's Memorial Day Service.



## ★ Honoring 50 years of EMS in Chicago

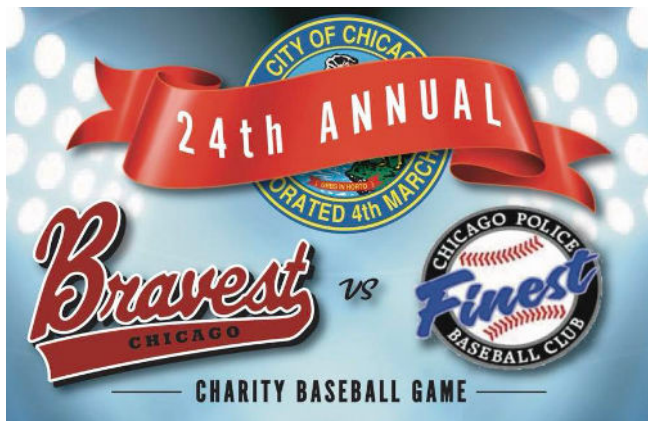
The Foundation sponsored the celebration of 50 years of EMS in the Chicago Fire Department held at the Hilton in Chicago. This event recognized the men and women who founded EMS on the Chicago Fire Department and all those members who have served and currently serve as Paramedics on the Chicago Fire Department. Thank you for your service.

## ★ Professional Development

The Foundation, once again, sponsored CFD members to attend the Fire Service Research Institute (FSRI) in Philadelphia. The FSRI provides science-based insights that are applied broadly by stakeholders to advance fire safety. This training was concentrated on Fire Dynamics for Structural Firefighting "train the trainer" course. The program was brought back to Chicago.

## ★ Gold Badge Society

The Foundation continued to support the Chicago Fire Department Gold Badge Society with the annual fundraiser, the CFD vs CPD baseball game.





# Working for a Safer Chicago Community Support



The Foundation continued our partnership with CFD Community Pop-Up events and local food pantries, who distributed free smoke detectors we provided, to serve residents of Chicago during these challenging times.

Thousands of smoke detectors have been given to families in need again this year. Two thousand were distributed in the months of October and November alone.

As you can see, we are working our way into Chicago's 77 neighborhoods.

It's why we funded "The Fire Escape" project, an investment of over one million dollars. This new

virtual reality technology help teach and engage students with the 10 steps to fire safety in the home. It is a first of its kind program in the United States. Students immerse themselves in a three-dimensional world and learn how to respond and safely evacuate during a fire in their virtual reality home. It is a powerful learning tool.

Every day, The Chicago Fire Department Foundation will strive to make further steps towards the goal of being the most prepared city in America with the ultimate goal of zero fire deaths.

We acknowledge your commitment in the cause. None of this would have been possible without your continued support.

**With your help, we can do our part to help those who are devoted to protecting us.**



**Home Fire Safety Tips:** The Foundation has 25 Home Fire Safety tips available for download on our website home page.



# Thank You Sponsors

We are grateful for the incredible support from our sponsors and co-chairs throughout 2024.

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## CFD FOUNDATION MISSION

The CFD Foundation supports the critical lifesaving work of the Chicago Fire Department. The Foundation works collaboratively with the CFD and its members to support its most crucial priorities; to reduce firefighter, paramedic, and civilian deaths and injury. The Foundation supports CFD initiatives for education, fire prevention, training and equipment needs that are not funded through city, state or federal budgets. The Foundation assists the firefighters/paramedics and their families in times of need. The CFD Foundation Board Members are all volunteers and receive no compensation. The CFD Foundation's resources are utilized to meet the mission of the CFD Foundation.



There is a famous quote by an unknown author that reads; **“Poor is the Nation that has no heroes, but shameful is the Nation that has them and forgets.”** We will not forget and we will continue to recognize these men and women who give so much and ask for nothing in return.



## SUPPORT OUR MISSION!

Scan the QR code to learn more about our work or to make a donation.



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