

THE FIRE MARK



BONITA SPRINGS FIRE CONTROL AND RESCUE DISTRICT MARCH 2016

ENGAGED: IN COMMUNITY AND IN MARRIAGE



"Going into the fire was the easy part," Chairman Lohan commented on Cristian Valiente's decision to propose to Santana Elizabeth Marie Torres, aka *His Lioness*, moments after receiving the esteemed Medal of Valor from the Bonita Springs Fire Control and Rescue District. The proposal, a first at a Fire Board Meeting, was accepted with applause and cheers from the crowd.

The happy moment was not to overshadow the nearly tangible appreciation felt from the packed room of citizens and Fire District employees for Jameson Gray and Cristian Valiente. The two lawn maintenance workers were working at a home on Dortch Ave. when the neighboring house became engulfed in flames with Ms. Shirley Corrigan and family inside. Mr. Gray and Mr. Valiente rushed to help without regard for their own safety and successfully assisted in the evacuation of Ms. Kristy Phillips, granddaughter of Ms. Corrigan, and her 2 year-old daughter Kristianne, who were also in the house at the time of the fire. "It went 'whoof', I grabbed my daughter and started screaming for my grandmother. It just happened so fast. The house filled up with smoke so fast. By the time I got out, The house was gone and glass was flying everywhere." A quote from the [News-Press](#) depicts Ms. Phillips' recollection of the fire that took the life of her grandmother.



Fire Chief Joseph Daigle was overjoyed by the engagement, however he wanted to make a pointed comment on Mr. Gray and Mr. Valiente's heroic attempts to save the family from the fire on Dortsch Ave.; "When this event took place, some people said, 'Are these men heroes or should they not have gone in? What would you say as the Chief about their unsafe act?' They're reacting - they're heroes, absolutely." Chief Daigle became emotional as he addressed the men directly, "I'm proud to have worked with you on that particular incident and have citizens like you in Bonita Springs." The Medal of Valor is a symbol of the immense bravery that the men displayed.

The District recognized other key individuals who made a tremendous impact on the overall outcome of the intensely dangerous fire scene. Lee County Sheriff's Office employees, Sergeant James Bogliole, Deputy Kristen Ridenour, and Lieutenant Brian Przespolewski were honored for their assistance on-scene. "I have nothing but the greatest admiration for what they do," Chief Daigle comments on the positive working relationship the Bonita Springs Fire Control and Rescue District shares with our counterparts at the Lee County Sheriffs Office, as he reflects of the years of working together for public safety. "These men and women here, on that fire scene, didn't say, 'It's not my job', they went in and helped us, trying to do the best they could in a highly dangerous and highly evolving situation."



BSFD IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

The Bonita Springs firefighters hit the streets yet again for the annual “Fill-the-Boot Drive”. 100% of funds collected are donated to the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) to help find a cure for the debilitating muscular disease. The District and Local 3444 is happy to announce that 2015 was the most successful boot drive to date, raising \$27,000 for the cause! This year, firefighters have collected \$24,250 from the generous residents and visitors of Bonita Springs. Firefighters will collect again at intersections in Bonita Springs on Saturday, March 26th with the intention of beating their \$30,000 goal. **Donations are also accepted online.** *Thank you Bonita Springs!*

PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS CALENDAR PROCEEDS

“It turns out when you pair rescued-animals with rescuers, calendars sell very well,” Natalie Hughes, the Calendar’s coordinator commented on the *Rescue Me* theme of the calendar which provided over \$5,000 of proceeds to local charities.

RESCUE ME

Bonita Springs Firefighters 2016

Supporting Lee County Domestic Animal Services

The sold out calendars were a huge success in gated communities, at bingo nights, and at calendar signings. The retail store, the *Best of Everything* was awarded with a Community Partner certificate for their records sales of the Calendar, selling over 125 calendars, equaling about 1/3 of our calendar sales.

Natalie Hughes also mentioned, “The Calendar started in 1999 and has always been a hit! In 2016, we’re in the era of smart phones and digital calendars and printable calendars are kinda a thing of the past. So we knew we had to do something a little bit different this year to generate sales. These rescue dogs and cats, along with twelve firefighters donated their time to make the calendar possible.”

The Bonita Springs Assistance Office received ten percent of the proceeds and The Lee County Domestic Animal Services received all remaining proceeds and donations from Bonita Springs Professional Firefighters Local 3444.

3RD ANNUAL EASTER OPEN HOUSE

This Saturday, March 19th at 10AM @ Fire Station Four located at 27701 Bonita Grande Drive

Heaps of hoppin’ activities are offered each year at the District’s Easter Open House, BSFD will provide the festive event to delight families with over 20 activities. Meet firefighters, explore fire trucks, and ride in the bucket of the 75 foot Ladder Truck. The Easter Bunny will be in attendance and, of course, there will be Easter egg hunts, crafts, games and face-painting!

This year at the Open House, Oak River Church will be collecting donations for the family of Ms. Shirley Corrigan, who passed away in the house fire on Dortsch Ave. Donations will benefit the four-generation family who shared the home as they begin to cope with her loss and get back on their feet. Checks can be made out to Oak River Church which is a 501(c)(3) organization.

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS AT BSFD

MAR EVENTS

19

EASTER OPEN HOUSE

APR EVENTS

MAY EVENTS