



THE BOTTOM LINE

KEEPING YOU INFORMED.

Toy Drive Partnership

GNFD PARTNERS WITH THE SALVATION ARMY AND TOYS FOR TOTS

East Naples Fire Control & Rescue District began the “Toy Drive Command” program over 45 years ago. Retired Lt. Richard Gibbons established the program when the toys were distributed to families in the small East Naples community at a District picnic held at a fire station. Over the years, the program has grown to serve thousands of children countywide.

Traditionally, the District would distribute collection boxes throughout the District and the community would generously donate new toys and monetary donations for children in need. The District would also set up a “toy store” in a donated commercial property space, and personnel, along with many business owners, civic groups, and volunteers would sort toys and escort families through the store. In recent years, the bays at Station 73 were used for the “toy store”.

As the District and the toy drive continued to grow and expand, this became a huge undertaking for the District to manage. In 2021, the District contacted The Salvation Army, who also runs a large toy drive with Toys for Tots, to see if we could consolidate our efforts. The District formed a committee under the leadership of Administrative Assistant Judy Schleiffer to coordinate the District’s participation in the program.

The District is extremely pleased with how well this partnership worked and how many families were provided toys this Christmas. AA Judy Schleiffer did an excellent job working with the Director of Volunteers & Holiday and Senior Services Maria Ramos to provide toys for over 4,000 children in our community.

The District was able to distribute a holiday safety message to all the families served through a flyer provided by the Fire and Life Safety Section. Thank you to all personnel, businesses, and volunteers who so generously donated to this very worthy cause. We look forward to another great unified toy drive program in 2022!



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GNFD was afforded another opportunity to conduct live fire training at an acquired structure at the beginning of November. The District, along with neighboring fire districts, were able to conduct valuable training for a week before the structure was completely burned. Miami-Dade Fire Rescue also took part in the training and included their cohort of Saudi Arabian Firefighters, providing them this unique and valuable experience.



COMMUNITY AWARDS

Sons of the American Revolution Awards

RECOGNIZING HARD WORK

Each year the Naples Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution honor Community First Responders for their service to the citizens of Collier County. The Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) was organized on April 30, 1889- the 100th anniversary of the inauguration of George Washington as our Nation’s first President. The SAR was chartered by an Act of the United States Congress on June 9, 1906. The Charter was signed by President Theodore Roosevelt, who was also a member of SAR. All members of SAR are direct descendants of Revolutionary War Patriots.

This year the Medal for Heroism was presented to Lt. Chris Rossi for all his work as the District’s Lead MERT Coordinator. His leadership has paved the road for any and all future development of the MERT program. The Fire Safety Commendation Award was presented to Captain Shar Beddow for her passion and advocacy for fire safety within the community and the fire and emergency services industry. We are very proud of the great accomplishments of Lt. Rossi and Captain Beddow!



CHAPLAIN’S CORNER

Life Lessons Learned From A Palm Tree

Good People Will Flourish Like The Palm Tree. Ps 92:12 (MSG)

CHAPLAIN JACK STROM



I am told by researchers that there are 2,600 species of palm trees, but in my Chaplains Corner I only have space to tell you about those that grow in our own neighborhood. Let me call to your attention to seven characteristics of the palm trees we see daily here in SWFL. First, there is its futuristic *uprightness*. Whether you see it on flat land or on ground with a prominent slope, our palms grow uniformly upright. The Bible has this in mind when it says, *They are upright as the palm trees*. Palm trees are mentioned in a positive way, more than 30 times in the Bible.

Second, there is its *overcoming power*. It grows, it even *flourishes* amid the times of drought in our dry season. Where most other trees would be survival challenged, our palm tree lifts its fronds in subtle victory. Sometimes we may wonder if there is too much emphasis today on improving environment, education, working conditions, and recreational amenities. It is all good; but there is something even better, and that is a change in ourselves. In the long view, it is not environment which changes us, but it is we who make our environment what it is (including our homes and yes, our places of employment and service, including GNFD.)

Third, the palm tree is peculiar in its *way of growth*. Unlike most other trees, instead of adding a new outer ring to the trunk every year, it grows outward by growing inwardly, from the center. And it is indeed the same in our schools, homes and again GNFD. It is the same pattern of an inward development with, and an outward result of character, to serve and help others.

Fourth, the palm tree is an *evergreen*. It knows not autumn brownness or winter bareness. It is why most of us live in the “tropics” of SWFL. We pretty much love living here all-year-round!

Fifth, the palm tree is outstanding in *the height of its foliage and fruit*. It is as though it would show its beauty and fruit before heaven, rather than just to be *seen by you and me*. Does not that, also, speak to us?

Sixth, it is notable for its *beauty of stature*. Each kind of palm has its own beauty, I recall how my wife and I, many years ago on our first visit to Florida, admired the stately *royal* palms here. In fact, we fell in love with all the palm trees. Oh, for more palm-tree beauty of stature in a *moral and spiritual sense also!*

Seventh, and finally I want to mark the *usefulness* of the palm tree. It is strong and yields fruit for the making of syrups, oils, juices, vinegars, milks, water and even medicine. It is good to remember that the older the tree, the sweeter its fruit and it still gives welcome shade. The question for each of us SWFL residents, are we good students of the lessons imparted to us by the palm-tree?

NEW TRADITIONS

GNFD Holiday Party

Fire Family

FOREST GLEN HOSTS HOLIDAY PARTY

Forest Glen Golf & Country Club Events hosted a spectacular holiday dinner party for GNFD staff and their family to enjoy this year. They have a beautiful facility that was decorated very festive for the holidays. We are very thankful to General Manager Tim Kragh, Assistant General Manager Allison Petscher, and Activities & Events Coordinator Marissa McCartney for making this event special for our personnel. The event was sponsored by Forest Glen, Local 2396, and the Command Staff.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Promotions

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

There are many qualities that make a good leader. Whether the leader of a few or many, these qualities are unwavering. The District prides itself on 3 important qualities in particular: professionalism, integrity, and compassion. There are many employees who have exceeded the boundaries of these characteristics and have established a new standard for themselves and those around them. We recognize these individuals and celebrate their promotions so that their contagious work ethic can have a better platform to inspire other employees. It goes without saying that the contributions of these individuals have made a tremendous impact on the day-to-day operations of the District. We look forward to the continued success of our recently promoted employees and celebrate their exemplary job performance.



Congratulations to Driver Engineer Chris Mercier who was pinned with his new badge at the January Board of Fire Commissioner meeting.



Congratulations to our newly promoted leaders in Fire and Life Safety, Captain Inspector Michael Cruz and Lieutenant Inspector Michael Bays.

Lifesaving Award

LT. MANNY ARROYO AND DE JOHN WINSLOW SAVE A LIFE

It’s not every day that a firefighter saves a life. So when a person is afforded the opportunity to live another day because of the courageous actions of our personnel, it’s a reason to celebrate! It came to the attention of Fire Chief Sapp that a woman was rescued from a structure fire in 2013 because of the quick and heroic actions of Lt. Manny Arroyo and former employee DE John Winslow, and they were not properly recognized at the time for this significant achievement in their careers. Chief Sapp presented both gentlemen with a lifesaving medal and thanked them for the sacrifices they made to save this woman’s life and keep our community safe.

