

## STANDING FAST

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF O'KANE FDNY RETIRED

Membership application is available on our website  
[www.okanefdnyretirees.com](http://www.okanefdnyretirees.com).

**WELCOME** to  
 "Standing Fast." The  
 official newsletter of the  
 Gene O'Kane Division of  
 FDNY Retired, the first  
 and oldest FDNY retirees  
 organization in the U.S.  
 We have been chartered  
 in the state of Florida  
 since 1979.  
 Postal Address: FDNY  
 Retired, 2053 Blue Beech  
 Ct., Trinity, FL 34655



### Who Are We?

We are an organization of retired New York City Firefighters living on the west coast of Florida in the areas of Pasco, Hernando, Citrus, Pinellas, Hillsborough counties.

Although now retired, we share the bond of having had the privilege of protecting lives and property of the residents of the City of New York as members of the greatest fire department in the world, the FDNY. As retirees of the FDNY, in 1978 we banded together to form the first chapter of the FDNY RETIRED, received a charter from the state of Florida and named our organization after our founder, Gene O'Kane. Thus we are "THE GENE O'KANE DIVISION OF FDNY RETIRED." Our division is the oldest of all the divisions of FDNY Retired, one of nine divisions located in Florida and one of twenty six divisions scattered across the United States. We are also a member of the the "URFA, the United Retired Firefighters Assn. We welcome all FDNY retirees, of all ranks, retired volunteer firefighters from all other municipalities and non-firefighters to join us in friendship and brotherhood as members of our proud organization.

*Membership and Meetings:* Membership in the Gene O'Kane Division of FDNY Retired is open to all FDNY retirees of all ranks, paid and volunteer firefighters from all cities across the U.S.A., also non-firefighters are accepted as "Associate Members." Applications for membership can be obtained by completing the application located on our website and mailing it in as directed. Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month with the exception of June, July and August, at 7 p.m. at the America Legion "Paradise Post" located on Veterans Drive in New Port Richey, Fl 34654.

**NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday, 3/17/2026. 7pm,  
 American Legion Paradise Post, New Port Richey, FL.



[okaneclubfdny@icloud.com](mailto:okaneclubfdny@icloud.com)

email us for more info.

### 2025 EXECUTIVE BOARD



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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT - MARCH 2026

Dear Members, Family and Friends,

Welcome to March 2026. That ground hog sure was right...we have certainly seen our share of winter weather. I don't know about you, but I am ready to get back to our Florida sunshine. On the plus side, at least we escaped the crazy blizzard that hit the northeast. No snow shovels needed here.

We had a very good turnout at our February meeting. Plans are moving ahead for the 25th anniversary of September 11th. Treasurer Louis Kikis (a member of the Curlew Hills planning committee) brought us up to date on the plans for that event. We will be updating you on details as we get closer to that date. As time passes, it is so important that we make every effort to ensure that WE NEVER FORGET.

We have some great things going on this month and I hope to see many of you there.

3/17/26: Monthly Membership Meeting (with our special St. Patrick's Day Corned Beef Sandwiches),  
3/27/26: Tunnel 2 Towers Home Dedication at Do Good Village in Land O Lakes  
3/28/26: Annual Installation Dinner Dance at Seven Springs Golf and Country Club

Complete details for this and other events are included in this newsletter.

Wishing you all a very Happy St. Patrick's Day!  
Stay safe and be well... hope to see you at our next meeting.

**KEVIN DOHERTY, President**

*All the best from your Board Members: Rich Miccio, Louis Kikis, Jim Savarese, Mike Doyle and your Board of Trustees: Jack D'Andrea, John Pasquale, John Murphy, and Steve McNally.*

***OKANE BOOSTERS: reminder...if your number is a 2 it's time to renew! Boosters run for 12 months. The number following your name indicates when your booster will expire.***

Thank you for your support. Anyone can be a booster. Family members, friends, etc.  
(Rev. 1/26)

Byrnes, Brian 1 Lt. Gene Sullivan, E39  
 Byrnes, Brian 1 Firefighter James Byrnes 1824. Batt 21  
 Byrnes, Brian 1 BC Carlo Andersen 456. Safety Batt  
 Byrnes, Brian 1 Firefighter Marty Celic Murdered 7/2/77 13108. T.L.18  
 Chichester, Dan10 Members of E275 1963-1987  
 Chichester, Dan10 Members of L126 1963-1987  
 Chichester, Dan10 Members of E234 1963-1987  
 Dunscomb Jim11 Honoring all members of E82  
 Dunscomb, Jim 1 Always in our hearts, E82  
 D'Andrea, Jack10 Members of Ladder 126  
 Incarnato, Charles10 Rockapulco - E268, L137 - Best on the Beach  
 Incarnato, Charles10 On The Edge - E314 Members LOL  
 Incarnato, Charles10 Never A Dull Moment E72, For Sure  
 Incarnato, Charles10 Mid-town High Rise E8,L2, Batt8  
 Incarnato, Charles10 The Bronx, must I say more? Great Memories  
 Incarnato, Charles10 In memory of John Askin, E48, my friend and brother  
 Kikis, Louis1 E22/ L13 "The Yorkville Nine"  
 Kikis, Louis1 343 Never Forget  
 Kikis, Victoria6 Honoring the memory or those who gave their all. 343 Never forget.  
 Kikis, Victoria6 RIP Jeff Giordano - 9/11/01  
 McCarren, Charles 1 BC Richard De Prima. Batt 49  
 McCarren, Charles 1 Lt. James McCarren E48  
 McCarren, Charles 1 Lt. Charles McCarren III FDNY Safety Command  
 McCarren, Charles 1 Lt. Daniel McCarren E298  
 McCarthy, William11 Members of L25, 9/11 Never Forget  
 Martinsen, Ron1 Mem BC Tom Neary L134  
 Martinsen, Ron1 Mem BC Chris Scalone E332  
 Miccio, Rich6 Tom Gambino L163 - 9/11/01 - RIP  
 Miccio, Rich6 L163/E325 - Woodside Warriors\*Nilsson Mike1 L 126  
 Nilsson, Mike1 Remembering members of E303, L126  
 Nilsson, Mike1 September 11, 2001. 343 - Never Forget  
 Ragusso, Rob11 Honoring all members of E289  
 Savarese Jim11 The Tin House Gang E-232/L176 BMA  
 Savarese Jim11 Watkins St. E-231/L-120/44BN  
 Savarese Jim11 Briggs Ave E79/L37/27BN  
 Savarese Jim11 RIP Ron Quartuccio  
 Tarantino Ron1 In Memory of Louis Tarantino

See next page for full instructions about sending in your Boosters....

**BY SENDING IN YOUR BOOSTER!  
YOUR MESSAGE COULD BE HERE. SHOW YOUR SUPPORT**

Becoming a Booster is simple. Just enter the name of your honoree and the message as you want it to appear. Each message is \$5.00 and runs for 1 year.

Example:

Your name and address

Your booster message:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Send your Booster. (\$5.00 per message) to:  
Mike Doyle, Financial Secretary  
5157 Silent Loop. Condo #314  
New Port Richey, FL 34652**

You may also find booster applications on our website:  
[www.okanefdnyretirees.com](http://www.okanefdnyretirees.com) or in our monthly newsletter

Boosters run for 12 months. The number following your name indicates when your Booster will expire. Thank you for your support. Anyone can be a booster. Family members, friends, etc. (Rev. 9/25)

**YOUR MESSAGE COULD BE HERE. SHOW YOUR SUPPORT**

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**BY SENDING IN YOUR BOOSTER!**

## UPCOMING EVENTS



TUESDAY, 3/17/26 - 7pm  
 Monthly Membership Meeting plus St.  
 Patrick's Day Corned Beef Sandwiches  
 American Legion Paradise Post,  
 New Port Richey, FL

### FRIDAY 3/27/26 - **Tunnel 2 Towers Home Dedication - Let Us Do Good Village**

6213 Do Good Way, Land O Lakes, FL 34639

All are invited to attend. Members should arrive by 9am to help set up. Bring your Class A's to change into or wear your O'Kane Club shirt. Ceremony starts at 1pm. Lunch served after ceremony.

## O'KANE FDNY RETIRED ANNUAL INSTALLATION DINNER DANCE:

Mark your calendars for our Annual Installation Dinner Dance at beautiful Seven Springs Golf and Country Club. The fun starts with cash bar and seasonal snacks at 4pm, followed by a full dinner buffet and dessert. We are happy to announce that Cat Valentine will be entertaining us with her music and songs so bring your dancing shoes! Remember that friends and family are all welcome. Here are the details you need to know:



**3/17/26 - last  
 Day to Pay for  
 Dinner Dance**

**Date: Saturday, March 28, 2026**

**Location: Seven Springs Golf and Country Club  
 3535 Trophy Blvd.  
 Trinity, FL 34655**

**Time: 4pm Cocktail Hour/5pm Dinner Service**

**Cost: \$45.00 per person**

**Payments and reservations need to be received by Tuesday, March 17, 2026.**

**Make checks payable to: O'Kane FDNY Retired**

**Mail to: Louis Kikis, Event Chairperson**

**4973 W Breeze Cir**

**Palm Harbor, FL 34683**

**TUNNEL TO TOWERS FOUNDATION HOME DEDICATION CEREMONY**  
**Honoring 3 American Heroes**



**Tunnel to Towers Foundation**  
**HOME DEDICATION CEREMONY**  
**HONORING THREE AMERICAN HEROES**

**FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2026 - 1PM**  
 Let Us Do Good Village  
 6296 Do Good Wy, Land O’ Lakes, Florida 34639

**JOIN US AS WE WELCOME HOME A HERO WHO EXEMPLIFIES SERVICE AND SACRIFICE.**

Born from the tragedy of 9/11, the Tunnel to Towers Foundation carries out its mission to “do good,” by providing mortgage-free homes to Gold Star and fallen first responder families with young children and by building specially-adapted *smart homes* for catastrophically injured veterans and first responders. Tunnel to Towers is also committed to eradicating veteran homelessness and to helping America to Never Forget September 11, 2001.

Through the *Smart Home Program*, the Foundation builds specially-adapted, mortgage-free *smart homes* that help our most catastrophically injured veterans and first responders to reclaim their day-to-day independence.

Visit [T2T.ORG](http://T2T.ORG) to learn more, and follow Tunnel to Towers on Facebook, X, and Instagram.

**HONORING**

U.S. Army Sergeant  
**MICHAEL MATHER**

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U.S. Army Specialist  
**JOSHUA TROMANHAUSER**

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Denver Police Dept, Recruit Officer  
**VICTOR MOSES**

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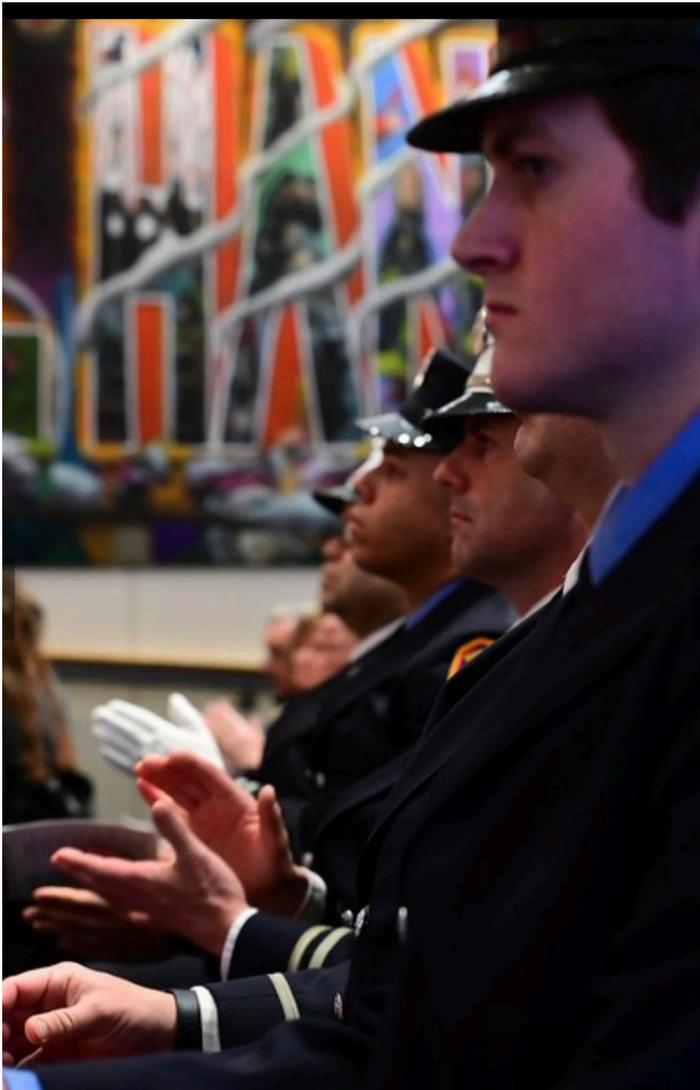
**THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

To RSVP, Please Email  
[WELCOMEHOME@T2T.ORG](mailto:WELCOMEHOME@T2T.ORG)

**O’Kane Club members who wish to volunteer to help set up should plan to arrive around 9:00am. Please bring your Class A’s with you to change into for the ceremony. If you do not have Class A’s, wear your O’Kane Club shirts or other FDNY attire.**

## The FDNY's official nonprofit organization honors September 11th with first-ever FDNY Foundation Never Forget Memorial

In commemoration of the 25th anniversary of September 11th, the FDNY and the FDNY Foundation hosted the first-ever Never Forget Memorial Scholarship Ceremony on Thursday, February 26, 2026, inside the Commissioner Robert O. Lowery auditorium at Department headquarters in Brooklyn.



The Inaugural scholarship ceremony honors the enduring legacy of the department's leadership and officers killed in the line of duty on September 11, 2001, and pays tribute to all those lost that day and those who have since died of illnesses related to the rescue and recovery efforts.

Each scholarship awarded to active FDNY members carries the name and legacy of one of the fallen heroes, ensuring their memory continues to inspire future generations of FDNY members.

"The future of our Department is shaped by education, training and a constant desire to be better," FDNY Commissioner Lillian Bonsignore said at the ceremony. "I want to thank the FDNY Foundation. These scholarships have a profound impact on all the recipients and on the future of the FDNY. By investing in our people, you are investing in the safety of our city and the strength of this Department for generations to come. Congratulations to all of today's recipients."

## THE SURVIVOR TREE...A LIVING SYMBOL OF RENEWAL, RESILIENCE, AND REBIRTH



In the center of the 9/11 Memorial stands a Callery pear tree of great significance. Proudly reaching over 30 feet tall, it is the first tree each year to bloom and the last to lose its leaves. It is a striking symbol of the revitalization of the World Trade Center site.

Here is the incredible story of its survival. It was nearly a month after the attacks that recovery workers discovered a branch poking out from the rubble. They cleared everything out of the way and found a bruised, burned, uprooted tree with only a few leaves on a single branch. It was still alive.

The New York City Department of Park and Recreation brought this tree to a nursery in Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx, where it rerooted and, with nurturing care, thrived. In the spring of 2002 the tree sprouted full of leaves and a dove made a nest in its boughs. The caretakers aptly named it The Survivor Tree.

The Survivor Tree was originally planted in early 1970 as the World Trade Center opened, welcoming workers and visitors each day. It was discovered amid the debris from the terrorist attacks just over 100 feet from its original home. The discovery and recovery of this tree served as inspiration for workers as they moved through their daily, somber tasks. The tree remained in Van Cortlandt until Ronaldo Vega came in as special project manager in 2007. He remembered the story of the tree and knew she needed to return to her World Trade Center home. That happened in October 2010 where she once again greets workers and visitors, inspiring them with hope, resilience, and rebirth.



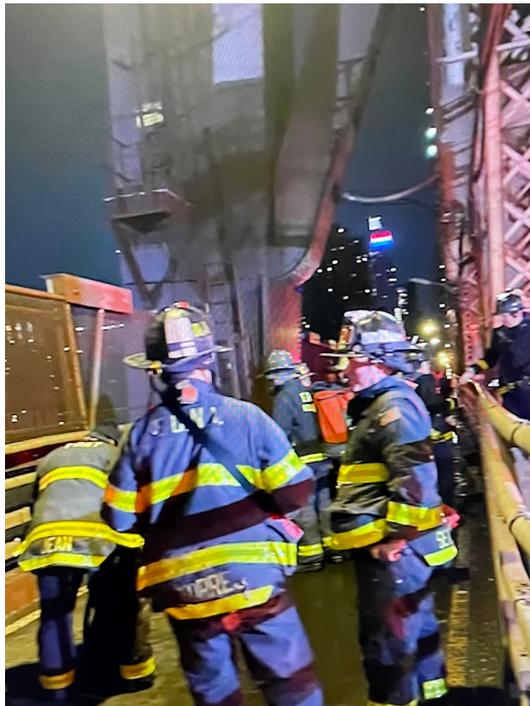
Today The Survivor Tree has spread far beyond New York City. **The Survivor Tree Seedling Program began in 2013. The 9/11 Memorial** presents seedlings to 3 communities each year that have endured tragedy in recent years. Saplings have been given to Ukraine, Ulavde, Buffalo, Parkland, Santa Fe High School and many others. The connection this creates expands on the love and hope that can be found at the Memorial spreading it throughout the world.

**You can visit The Survivor Tree any time you are in Manhattan. For information about the 9/11 Ground Zero Museum, Ground Zero & 9/11 Memorial visit their website: [www.911groundzero.com](http://www.911groundzero.com).**

## TIK TOK STUNT GOES WRONG...FDNY TO THE RESCUE

On Monday night, February 16, 2026, a 16-year-old boy decided to try and make his mark on social media with a hair-brained stunt resulting in a massive rescue response. The Lynbrook, Long Island teen and some friends decided to take part in a Tik Tok trend called Urban Exploring, or Ubrexing, the hobby (often illegal) exploring, documenting, and photographing experiences in “forbidden spaces.”

They chose the Queensborough Bridge in Manhattan for their stunt. Leaving his cell phone with his companions, the teen climbed up the bridge and then down a ladder into a shaft where he became trapped after falling roughly 5 stories. His companions did not report the incident or call for help. It was reported that they recorded him crying for help and posted it on social media. Shortly after one companion contacted the parents who called for help. The teen was stuck in the shaft for about 3 hours.



A rescue team of 75 responded to the incident, including EMT’s FDNY, and NYPD personnel.

Firefighters initially suspected that the teen was inside a tower on the Queens side of the bridge after finding an open hatch there. After determining that the teen wasn’t there, firefighters searched the bridge tower by tower until they came across another open hatch - this time splattered with blood and with a shoe beside it. Responding FDNY Lieutenant Christopher Gaulrapp said, “The victim was in serious condition with major trauma. We needed to get him out as soon as possible.”

After assessing the victim, firefighters strapped the teen to a Spec-Pak harness system and pulled him to safety. “Once we laid eyes on him, the adrenaline that was felt, it was moving,” said Firefighter Khalid Lee, who went down the shaft after the injured teen. “But this is what we train for, and I just continued to descend and try to find the

person.”

The teen later admitted he wanted to record his stunt with plans to post it on Tik Tok, officials said. Medics rushed him to New York Presbyterian Hospital Weill Cornell, where he was listed in critical but stable condition.

# TAMPA INTERNATIONAL TO BAN PJ’S....NOT REALLY!

*The airport issued a new statement following its divisive ban. Read on.*

There are two types of people in the world: People who turn up to the airport with a full face of makeup and a chic business casual look, and people who rock up to departures in the comfiest, coziest clothes they can find. Usually that means full-on PJ’s. Now pajamas are something of a controversial travel outfit formula — but there is that they are popular. In fact, they are so popular Airport recently announced they were BANNING wearing them to their airport. Now, after the statement generated a whole lot of conversation the airport clarified that **apparently it was all a**

In the February 27, 2026 issue of The New York reported that Tampa International would be a ban on the wearing of pajamas. In response to media blast that followed this “announcement” spokesman Beau Zimmer told the Associated post was simply part of the airport’s long-joke-y brand voice on social media. “Our regular followers just eat this stuff up,” Zimmer said. obviously the is all in fun, and we encourage our comfortable.:



Actress Nicole Richie at Perth Airport in 2007

no denying that Tampa travelers from initial and confusion, **big joke...**

Post, it was implementing the social airport Press that the standing social media “ But travelers to be



Actress Sharon Stone at LAX in Navy Satin PJ’s

### Not everyone is Gung-Ho on PJ’s...here are Some thoughts:

“Almost every other country on Earth (yes even the poor ones) respects itself to not wear bed time clothing in public.”

“It’s time for adults to behave as adults and grow up.”

“There was a time when Americans would dress up for travel. How Americans dress now speaks volumes as to where our National soul is at.”

### WHAT’S YOUR OPINION?



This ends our monthly newsletter.....see you at our next meeting,  
**Tuesday, 3/17/26,**  
**7pm - American Legion Paradise Post, New Port Richey, FL.**



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