

# FIREMEN'S MUTUAL BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

of New Jersey  
Branch No. 9

*President:*

MICHAEL GUARINO

*Vice President:*

DAVID BIALAS

*Treasurer:*

DEAN MELACHRINOS

24 SOUTH BROAD STREET – ELIZABETH, N. J. 07202

PHONE: (908) 355-7090 – FAX: (908) 355-7037

EMAIL: info@elizabethfireunion.com

*Secretary:*

EDWARD MALINIAK

*Sergeant-at-Arms:*

KEVIN MACNAB

*State Delegate:*

DANIEL BEIRNE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: David Bialas, Vice President

Firemen's Mutual Benevolent Association of New Jersey, Branch No. 9, Inc.

(908) 377-6769

vicepresident@elizabethfireunion.com

## ELIZABETH FIREFIGHTERS REFLECT ON SEASON OF GIVING

**ELIZABETH, NJ – January 12, 2015** – Three Kings Day, January 6<sup>th</sup>, marks the unofficial end of the holidays and members of the Elizabeth Firemen's Mutual Benevolent Association of New Jersey, Branch No. 9, Inc. (FMBA Local 9) remained diligent in their benevolence during the busy season. In biblical history, the child of Bethlehem, Jesus, was visited by Magi on camels bringing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. This season, the children of Elizabeth were visited by firefighters on fire trucks bringing gifts of toys, bicycles, and coats.

FMBA Local 9 started the season off by working with Janice de Avila who is known for her work around Elizabeth and her involvement with the Historic Midtown Special Improvement District. This year, her charity event was planned in cooperation with Michelino's Restaurant. FMBA Local 9 donated toys to be delivered to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Local 9 Vice President David Bialas stated, "Every event that Janice runs greatly benefits our community or a great cause, and we were happy to be able to join her in this celebration." Local 9 duplicated its efforts by donating toys to Ryan's Toy Roundup held this year at Suspenders Restaurant and Pub. This yearly event honors the life of Ryan Faella, the late cousin of Local 9's members, Edward Sisk IV and Nicholas Sisk. "Whenever an event honors a member of our firefighter family it gives the cause extra meaning," added Vice President Bialas. The toys from Ryan's Toy Roundup were donated to numerous charities in Elizabeth and around Union County.

After a successful Thanksgiving collaboration Elizabeth firefighters again worked with Missionaries on a Mission, this time to provide bicycles to children in our community. This program is in honor of the late Elizabeth Police Department Detective Edward Gray, father of Local 9 member Mark Gray. While he was working for EPD, Det. Gray would provide raffle tickets to children in the community for a chance to receive a bicycle during the holidays. Local 9 President Michael Guarino stated, "We were honored to be asked to assist in the bicycle giveaway especially when it honors the memory of one of our member's family." The children of the organizers of this event grew up benefiting from the kindness of Det. Gray and that is why Missionaries on a Mission continue this program today. Local 9 helped Missionaries on a Mission surpass its goal of gifting over fifty bicycles.

Elizabeth firefighters also made a trip to the New Jersey Firemen's Home in Boonton, NJ to bring some cheer to the residents, including former Elizabeth firefighters. Local 9 made a donation of toiletries and personal effects that the residents can use on a daily basis. President Guarino stated, "It was nice to meet the men who walked in our boots before us and to share in the stories of working fires, apparatus, and life in the fire department."

For the third consecutive year, Local 9 joined with New Jersey State Police to provide coats for children in need in our Elizabeth Public Schools. This program was coordinated by Trooper Reinaldo Cruz and the state chapter of the National Black State Troopers Coalition. “After a successful distribution of coats at our schools in 2012 we were unable to participate last year due to a multiple alarm fire,” said President Guarino. He added, “We are appreciative of Fire Director Onofrio Vitullo and Chief Thomas McNamara for allowing our members to again help in the distribution of coats and bring smiles to the faces of the children in our schools.”

Last week, Local 9 and the New Jersey State FMBA partnered with Assemblywoman Annette Quijano for the Fifth Annual Three Kings Day Celebration for the Trinitas Pediatrics Program. Elizabeth Firefighters were joined by the Hispanic Law Enforcement Association of Union County and National Coalition of Latino Officers. The donations from Local 9 and NJFMBA will go towards the purchase of iPads by the Trinitas Health Foundation to help in the development of autistic patients and those with developmental disorders. “Anytime that we can come together to benefit the children of Elizabeth we as a community are successful,” said Vice President Bialas, “Assemblywoman Quijano brought together politicians, first responders, and leaders in our community who put their lives and careers on hold for an afternoon to celebrate with the children of Trinitas.”

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*The Firemen’s Mutual Benevolent Association of New Jersey, Branch No. 9, Inc. (FMBA Local 9) is a community organization that represents and promotes the interests of the firefighters of the City of Elizabeth, NJ Fire Department. FMBA Local 9 is a branch of the New Jersey Firefighters Mutual Benevolent Association.*

*The purposes for which the corporation is organized include the following:*

- *to provide moral support and aid to its members in good standing and to firefighters in the local community of the City of Elizabeth;*
- *to bring about civic betterment and benevolence, improved public services, and social and safety improvement with respect to firefighting in the local community of the City of Elizabeth;*
- *to promote the legal rights of firefighters in the local community of the City of Elizabeth;*
- *to publicly or privately support acts or legislation deemed beneficial to the local community of the City of Elizabeth;*
- *to take necessary action to achieve the revocation or repeal of acts or legislation deemed detrimental to the local community of the City of Elizabeth;*
- *to promote, advance, and improve financially and otherwise the welfare, conditions, and interest of firefighters in its environs and to aid and cooperate with the New Jersey State Firemen’s Benevolent Association.*