ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FIRE EDUCATION

THE HALL OF FLAME MUSEUM OF FIREFIGHTING HAS TWO MAIN MISSIONS. ONE, OF COURSE, IS TO PRESERVE AND PRESENT THE HISTORY OF FIREFIGHTING THROUGH MUSEUM EXHIBITS AND PRESENTATIONS. THE SECOND, WHICH IS ULTIMATELY FAR MORE IMPORTANT, IS TO TEACH YOUNG CHILDREN THE BASICS OF FIRE SAFETY, AND TO REINFORCE THESE LESSONS IN OLDER CHILDREN, ADULTS, AND EVEN SENIORS.

FOR OLDER CHILDREN AND ADULTS, WE CONDUCT GUIDED TOURS ON FIREFIGHTING HISTORY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIALIZED TECHNIQUES. BUT FOR PRESCHOOL AGE CHILDREN THROUGH AGE SEVEN, WE FOCUS ON IMPARTING FIRE SAFETY INFORMATION USING SEVERAL METHODS. WE DO THIS THROUGH OUR "STORYTIME TOURS," WHICH FEATURE A FUN, NON-THREATENING STORYBOOK, USUALLY JEAN PENDZIWOL'S *NO DRAGONS FOR TEA*, FOLLOWED BY AN INTERACTIVE TALK ABOUT SUCH CLASSIC SAFETY RULES AS "STOP, DROP, AND ROLL," "FALL AND CRAWL/GET LOW AND GO," THE PROPER USE OF 9-1-1 AND, ABOVE ALL, REMEMBERING THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT WORDS IF YOU'RE EVER IN A BURNING BUILDING: GET OUT.

THE HALL OF FLAME ALSO PARTNERS WITH THE ARIZONA BURN FOUNDATION AND THEIR "MILO & MOXIE: SAFETY RANGERS" PROGRAM IN OUR KIDS' AREA TO HELP PROMOTE BURN SAFETY IN THE HOME. MILO IS A CORGI AND MOXIE IS A HUMMINGBIRD, AND TOGETHER THESE FRIENDS LEARN ABOUT BURN SAFETY AND PREVENTION AND PASS THESE LESSONS ON TO OUR YOUNG VISITORS THROUGH EXHIBIT DISPLAYS, HANDOUTS LIKE COLORING BOOKS, AND THERE IS EVEN AN APP AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AT MILOANDMOXIE.ORG.

FOR DECADES OW WE HAVE BROUGHT THESE LESSONS TO SCHOOL KIDS EVERY YEAR: CLASS BY CLASS, DAY CAMP BY DAY CAMP, HOMESCHOOL GROUP BY HOMESCHOOL GROUP... EVEN INDIVIDUAL CHILD BY CHILD WHEN NECESSARY, AND WE'RE PROUD TO DO IT BECAUSE IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT WORK. IN RECENT YEARS WE'VE IMPLEMENTED A "VOLUME, VOLUME, VOLUME" APPROACH, AS WELL AS EXPANDED THE EFFECTIVE STORYTIME TOURS TO SECOND GRADERS OF A WHOLE SCHOOL DISTRICT OVER A PERIOD OF TWO MONTHS.

BEGINNING IN 2021, AND CONTINUING LAST YEARS, THE CARTWRIGHT SCHOOL DISTRICT, A DISTRICT OF MORE THAN 20 SCHOOLS IN THE WEST VALLEY, SENT EVERY SECOND-GRADE CLASS FROM ALL THEIR SCHOOLS-APPROXIMATELY 1700 CHILDREN IN ALL-TO THE HALL OF FLAME LAST YEAR. THIS PROCESS STARTED IN SEPTEMBER, WITH TWO CLASSES FROM A SCHOOL COMING EVERY MORNING, MONDAY THROUGH THURSDAY.

WITH ASSISTANCE FROM HALL OF FLAME VOLUNTEERS, HALF OF THE KIDS WOULD HEAR THE STORY WHILE THE OTHER HALF WOULD GET A TOUR, HEAR SAFETY PRESENTATIONS, AND GET SOME PLAY TIME IN OUR KID'S AREA, THEN THE TWO GROUPS WOULD SWITCH. FACTORING IN DAYS OFF FOR FALL BREAK AND HOLIDAYS, THE PROCESS CONTINUED UNTIL LATE NOVEMBER. AMONG THE SCHOOLS THAT ATTENDED WAS BRET TARVER ELEMENTARY - NAMED IN MEMORY OF A FIREFIGHTER/PARAMEDIC FROM PHOENIX FIRE'S ENGINE 14, WHO DIED IN THE LINE OF DUTY IN MARCH OF 2001.

THE CARTWRIGHT PROJECT WAS A GREAT DEAL OF WORK, BUT WE ENORMOUSLY ENJOYED THE TEACHERS AND THE BRIGHT, IMPRESSIVELY WELL-BEHAVED STUDENTS. APPARENTLY, THE CARTWRIGHT FOLKS ENJOYED COMING HERE AS WELL; WE'RE VERY PROUD TO NOTE THAT THE HALL OF FLAME STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS RECEIVED THE CARTWRIGHT SCHOOL DISTRICT AWARD OF EXCELLENCE IN 2022.

WE HOPE THAT THE CARTWRIGHT DISTRICT WILL MAKE US A REGULAR PART OF THEIR FALL CALENDAR. WE ALSO HOPE THAT OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS WILL CONSIDER EMULATING CARTWRIGHT'S EXAMPLE. FIRE SAFETY EDUCATION IS VITALLY IMPORTANT FOR EVERYONE TO LEARN, AND THE EARLIER YOU LEARN, THE MORE TIME YOU WILL HAVE TO TURN THIS KNOWLEDGE INTO LIFE-LONG (AND PERHAPS EVEN LIFESAVING) HABITS.