



Creators of the #1 online resource for firefighters and family members.



#### MISSION:

*To Honor,  
Strengthen &  
Encourage*

the marriages and families  
of first responders  
by providing the best  
resources for relational,  
emotional, physical and  
family health.

# MEASURING THE RESULTS OF MARRIAGE SUPPORT

## April 2016 Report

Dear Supporter,

All businesses strive to deliver the best products and value to their customers. As a non-profit, it's essential that we provide the most impact for every dollar donated or raised and that we are transparent with our efforts to do so.

Measuring the impact of marriage support is not easy. We can't say "for every dollar donated 25 children are given clean drinking water for a month." But we do actively measure our results, adjust for greater impact and are diligent about staying focused on the mission.

***We believe the most successful way to strengthen and support marriages is to create a safe community with peers and mentors and access to tools and resources*** that apply to their lifestyle (the fire family life). In serious cases of marriage crisis, professional one on one counseling is always recommended, however when surrounded by a positive community and the resources to help you learn and understand that...

1. You are not the only one who experiences this.
2. There are other viewpoints you can learn from.
3. There are peers and mentors who care about your marriage and want to help you over the little road bumps.

...you can prevent the major crises faced by some couples.

**24-7 COMMITMENT delivers on our mission by creating these resources and the community as follows:**

- Online communities via Facebook Groups (currently the most common platform for connecting)
  - Guided marriage support programs led by trained mentors in these spaces
- Organically via the friendships that are formed within these safe communities
- In person via:
  - Local fire family events
  - Live Workshops held during national fire service events or locally at departments
  - Phone calls / video calls either one on one or in small groups
  - Commitment Weekends for firefighters and their spouse

**We believe creating resources that are relatable to the first responder life is the most effective way to earn the trust and respect of fire families needing support in our communities.**

**Our resources include:**

- **Marriage On Fire** - 6 Week Self-Paced Video Series created by founders Dan & Lori Mercer who are both trained as small group leaders and share from personal experiences while connecting the audience to the right marriage tools for their needs.
- **“Honor & Commitment: Standard Life Operating Guidelines for Firefighters & Their Families”** Our End-to-End guidebook for everything related to fire family life.
- **Commitment Weekend** A getaway weekend for couples with fire themed activities and messages for marriage.
- **Free Resource Library:** Over 800 articles, videos and resources created and accessible free of charge at our website
- **Social Engagement:** Daily posts, challenges and encouragement posted across our social media channels. For those who won't engage at a deeper level, social media allows us to deliver a message that can change cultures and inspire individuals to take the first steps.
- **Guided programs for our small groups** for topics including
  - Marriage & Family
  - Fitness, Diet and Exercise
  - Blended Families, Families with Special Needs, Infertility
  - Finances
  - Behavioral Health, PTSD especially pertaining to the fire service
  - Working Moms, Business Owners
  - Spouses of Officers and Chiefs
  - Volunteer Fire Families

**In short, we bridge the gap for firefighters and families to form a support community and have access to resources that are typically not available at their local department. This**

also alleviates the need for departments to invest in creating these programs on their own so they can focus on keeping firefighters well trained and safe on the job. By reinforcing a strong family foundation, firefighters do perform better on the job.

So how do we measure the impact of our work? It's not by tracking saved marriages which would be impossible. We watch the numbers for who and how our community engages:

- Social Media: Over 100,000 followers on Facebook reaching over 1 million views in a week. With the constant changing landscape of Facebook, this is a very large and admired audience we have grown and sustained over 4 years.
- Small groups: nearly 400 registered in January 2016
- Over 250 Women applied to our Rescue My Marriage Program in the first 18 months
- Commitment Weekend: over 300 attendees in the first 3 years
  - Over 60 full or partial scholarships given since 2013 totalling \$25,000
- Fire Wife Sisterhood (Women's Community): 2400 newly registered in the past 12 months
- Honor Guard (Men's Community): 1300 registered in 2015
- Marriage On Fire Program: 156 paid subscribers in the first year, Over 200 more subscriptions donated

### **Facebook Group Activity**

Example numbers from a 2 year period of the Fire Wife Sisterhood Facebook Group

- 20,710 posts
- 176,099 comments
- 8.5 average comments per post
- 1,356 active members
- 99.3% of posts liked or commented

### **Resource View / Download Examples**

- Disarming Your Irritable Sleep Deprived Firefighter - 93,000 views
- When A Firefighter Needs Help - 81,000 views
- Why My Firefighter Goes In Before Shift Time - 64,000 views
- 12 Steamy Nights With Your Firefighter - 12,000 downloads
- Fire Family Life eBook (released in Feb 2016) 1700 Downloads
- Over 42,000 views on our YouTube Channel

## **Understanding Our Expenses and Funding**

Many people say "Facebook is free. How can this cost anything?" There are many people involved in preparing the materials, graphics, emails, articles, videos and actually being an encourager and leader within our online communities. The majority of our expenses go towards this **Program Development and Delivery** such as the staff tasked with creating these

resources and the tools to host them (websites, content management systems, etc) This encompasses 60% of our annual expenses.

**Commitment Weekends** are our most expensive endeavor, but with the biggest impact on individual marriages. On average, these weekends are 30% of our annual expenses.

### **Marketing Expenses**

Getting the word out about this mission is essential to it's effectiveness and not possible without investing in marketing for items such as brochures, events (like attending FDIC and Firehouse World / Expo) and paying for some online advertising since our audience uses online tools as our primary access. Attending events is the largest expenditure and to an extent, these marketing expenses are covered under Program Delivery as we use these venues to deliver our resources to the audience.

**Administration:** All organizations have administrative expenses for legal, accounting and liability purposes. We carry insurance for the safety of our team and event participants and use professionals in these spaces for both integrity and quality of work. All partners offer significant non-profit discounts in support of our mission.

## Funding in 2015

Other organizations creating these valuable resources online are charging for them and running for profit businesses. As a non-profit, our goal is to provide these to as many fire families as possible for free or lower prices. This happens when donors (individuals or businesses) provide financial (and other kinds) of support for our organization. Those who believe in the mission and are able to provide financial support are truly what sustains these programs.

24-7 COMMITMENT was funded as follows in 2015:

- 30% Individual Donors
- 40% Partners, primarily QALO
- 20% Revenue from Program fees i.e. Marriage On Fire
- 10% Proceeds from Merchandise Sales

Commitment Weekends are not considered a source of additional funding for our organization as the cost to hold them exceeds the registration fees which are charged. We believe in the power of these events and will continue to bring them to the community as affordably as possible.

While merchandise may seem to be a likely source of funding to everyone who offers t-shirt campaigns online, it has a high cost to participate with inventory purchases and a lot of manual labor that can be distracting from the true mission of our group. We will continue to selectively

participate in merchandise opportunities where the effort, message and value align with our mission.

## Volunteer Support

No non-profit operates without an army of able and willing volunteers. At the end of 2015, our volunteer team count was at 86 in roles such as: Fire Wife Captain, Community Group Leader, Group Administrator, Marriage Mentor, Event Coordinators and Care Team.

While we did not officially track hours of all 86 volunteers, it is estimated that **nearly 5,000 volunteer hours were donated to the mission in 2015.**

## The Intangible Measure

What matters most are the words from our community. Here are a couple of our most recent comments..

“You have no idea what this group did for my marriage, I was about to walk away and file for divorce, I did this dare without my FF knowing and it changed BOTH of us! We are now moving forward and Working on our marriage!”

“The love dare group is building great connections and women are sharing their vulnerabilities and successes! It's an awesome small group with major impact!

“I joined firewife 24-7 after our first Christmas party in our new department. FF had already put in a year of service. I was really surprised at the amount of wives (there were only a handful). When I asked my FF about it he explained about the industry having higher divorce rates. I was pretty scared and made a commitment to do all that I could to prep for the harder seasons ahead of us by building a strong foundation. When explained to my mom the rate of divorce she asked me "Are you sure this is what you want?". My response was "yes, these women are making it work. they are so strong and so independent. They have built great networks of support. I can identify with that already.”

## Our Commitment To Integrity and Focus On The Mission

Saving every marriage is not realistic unfortunately. But we vow to stay committed to the mission and deliver everything with the utmost integrity. Our door is always open and we are eager for more believers in this mission to join in.

*Lori Mercer*, Founder 24-7 COMMITMENT      *Daniel Mercer*, Contributor & #1 Supporter