



Firefighters Creating Memories Program Fresno City Firefighters Providing Fun-Filled Memories to Children with Disabilities, Illness and Emotional Trauma

Now in its 27th year of operation, the Firefighters Creating Memories program will once again give children who might otherwise be unable to attend the Fair the chance to experience the great traditions and fun! This special program is made available to children who suffer from terminal or debilitating illnesses, physical limitations, mental disabilities or serious emotional trauma. The Firefighters Creating Memories Program, in partnership with The Big Fresno Fair and Butler Amusements provide the opportunity for these children to enjoy The Big Fresno Fair like a VIP for an entire day.

“This program has been a longstanding tradition at The Big Fresno Fair,” said Lauri L. King, CEO at The Big Fresno Fair. “Each year it is amazing to meet these kids and their families, and be able to welcome them to the Fair. This gives them the opportunity to step away from treatments and physical therapy to just enjoy being a kid at the Valley’s largest annual event!”

The children and their families are escorted around the Fair by a dedicated team of Fresno City Firefighters and firefighters from around the Valley, offered access to every part of the fun, no matter what their medical condition. Children are aided in riding rides, playing games and experiencing the Fair to its fullest. The Big Fresno Fair’s carnival provider, Butler Amusements, allows these children and their escorts to ride on as many rides as they want and even sends them on their way afterwards with a coveted stuffed animal.

This special program takes place Monday through Thursday from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Friday through Sunday from Noon to 4:00 p.m. One family is scheduled per day at The Big Fresno Fair with three to five firefighters to assist each family. The Firefighters Creating Memories Program was founded by retired Fire Captain Bob Waterston and retired Battalion Chief Chuck Tobias. During the program’s tenure, it has served over 2,000 family members and created priceless memories for them to treasure.

“The benefits of the Firefighters Creating Memories Program have far exceeded our original goals,” said Tobias. “Our primary goal is to create lifelong memories for these children and their families by allowing them to experience the Fair fun like a VIP. We are also making it possible for these children to forget about their disabilities or medical conditions for a day and just be a kid!”

The Firefighters Creating Memories Program is a partnership of several service organizations including the Fresno Firefighters Association, Fresno Fire Chiefs Foundation, Make-A-Wish Foundation, Children’s Hospital Central California, Break the Barriers, Exceptional Parents Unlimited, The Big Fresno Fair, Butler Amusements, HVL Construction Inc. and private businesses. All funding is provided by local businesses, the Fresno Fire Chiefs Foundation and The Big Fresno Fair.

**Interviews Available: Invited Children and their Families; Emmanuel Chavez, Fresno Fire Captain
(Request these interviews in advance.)**