



southeastern  
firefighters  
burn foundation

# CELEBRATING our bffs



**WHAT DO A BURN  
SURVIVOR, RESTAURANT  
OWNER, FIREFIGHTER  
AND MEDICAL PRODUCTS  
VENDOR HAVE IN  
COMMON?**

**They're all BFFs -**  
Burn Foundation Friends – Read  
their amazing stories in this issue,  
which kicks off the Southeastern  
Firefighters Burn Foundation's  
2016 BFF Campaign.

# LAWRENCE MANKER JR.



## Why did I Live?

Lawrence Manker, Jr., recalls that fateful day, February 7, 2008, when his life changed forever. "It was a regular day, like any normal day, and it all happened so fast. I was at work and looked up and a ball of fire was coming at me. I could do nothing but try to cover myself and get away. (Fellow employee) Shemier Frasier and I helped each other get out and I remember getting into David May's car and he drove me to the ambulance and that's the last thing I remember until I woke up six months later," Lawrence shared. "It's only by the grace of God that I survived."

Lawrence suffered burns over 85 percent of his body, and laid in a drug-induced coma for six months in the Joseph M. Still Burn Center. Lawrence was among 40 workers injured in the Imperial Sugar Refinery explosion, located in Port Wentworth, GA, near Savannah. Twenty victims were admitted to the Burn Center. The blast, caused by sugar dust igniting like gunpowder, took the lives of 14 people.

When Lawrence awoke he was very weak and couldn't move his arms or legs. He started to remember the accident, but had no idea how badly he had been injured. Then he looked in the mirror and the image he remembered before was no longer there. All of the emotions that most burn patients encounter were no different for Lawrence, including depression and suicide. The worst day he recalls is when another burn survivor from the accident, Malcolm Frazier, died in the Burn Center. That left Lawrence as the last remaining burn patient from the explosion. Eight months after the explosion he was discharged and daily he questioned why God had allowed him to live when others had died. He questioned God's purpose for his life.

While the outlook for Lawrence's future may have seemed dim, he had three intangibles that made a positive difference. First, he had the support and presence of his family. The son of Diane Manker and Lawrence Manker, Sr., Lawrence grew up in a close-knit family, went to church and enjoyed a carefree childhood where he spent every free moment playing sports. It was that family support that encouraged Lawrence to not give up. He recognized how vital the role family plays in the healing process for a burn patient.

Secondly, Lawrence had a fighting spirit. That showed in his fierce competitiveness as a young athlete at Johnson High School.

**From then on I knew the purpose for my life, all the questions were answered.**



Whether football, basketball, soccer or track, Lawrence not only tried out, but was also a standout. He earned a football scholarship as a walk-on at Savannah State University weeks prior to the refinery explosion. That fighting spirit was a major factor for Lawrence in learning to walk and participate in sports again. His friends at the YMCA basketball court give him no slack. And Lawrence would not want it any other way. "They come at me hard," explained Lawrence. "I've always been a fighter. Nothing is given to you in life. It's the same way in sports. I love the challenge."

Lastly, Lawrence had a strong faith. God answered Lawrence's tough question, "why am I still here?" at a church "shut-in" February 1, 2014. "Until then I lived in so much fear but that night when I accepted Christ as my Lord, it was like a weight lifted off of me. From then on I knew the purpose for my life, all the questions were answered," explained Lawrence. "That was the day that life changed for the better. I knew that I lived so that I could help

others." The next best day was June 28, 2014 when he married his childhood sweetheart, Vanessa. Lawrence credits Vanessa's love and support that continues to drive him today to give back to his community.

In 2010, Lawrence returned to Savannah State University, where his football scholarship was honored. Though he couldn't play football, he served as the team equipment manager, and no doubt served as an inspiration to the team as well. Last December Lawrence graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science Technology. For his graduation, Vanessa threw a party and in lieu of gifts, asked guests to donate to the Southeastern Firefighters Burn Foundation, so that other families like theirs could be helped. Over \$10,000 was raised for the Foundation.

Today Lawrence is working towards a Masters degree in Theology from Covington Theological Seminary. "I'm having the most fun I have ever had in studying the Word. I love teaching and helping others grasp the Word." He often teaches at his church, True Gospel Deliverance Center. Lawrence and Vanessa want to start a non-profit to help other people. "I love helping people and seeing them smile. I believe God saved me to put me in a position to help others."



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The Burn Foundation provides assistance to families of burn patients being treated in the Joseph M. Still Burn Center. This includes lodging, meals and transportation – all free of charge. The Chavis House is a 40-bed guesthouse, including a kitchen and laundry facility and ensures that families can be part of the care and recovery of their loved one. Meals are provided each day by local churches and civic groups. Last year, more than 1,100 individuals were guests of the Chavis House. In addition, the Burn Foundation provides assistance to patients upon their discharge with services related to their transition to independent living. This includes medication, anti-scarring garments and transportation for follow up medical visits.

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ERIC CLARK



# Making a Difference

**What started as a love for a sub sandwich has turned into a lucrative career for Eric Clark. The owner of Clark Construction Services and seven Jersey Mike's Subs Restaurants recalls where it all began.**

"My construction company was doing some work in Myrtle Beach and I stopped at Jersey Mike's for lunch. I got hooked and kept going back. I loved the food and I couldn't figure out why we didn't have something like this back in Augusta," explained Eric. When Eric returned to Augusta he began researching the company for franchise opportunities and the rest, as they say, is history.

The food wasn't the only thing that lured Eric to Jersey Mike's. The company's values match his as well. The Jersey Mike's company website reads, "Our culture of giving at Jersey Mike's is as much a part of our heritage as oil and vinegar. We believe that making a great sub sandwich and making a difference can be one in the same." It's a requirement for all franchisees to be committed to giving back to their communities. Each store opens by partnering with a charity in the local community, and during the 5-day grand opening, customers can donate to the charity and get a free sub. Every March the company supports its Month of Giving, when a percentage of the profits support the charity partner, culminating on the last Wednesday of each March with the Day of Giving, when 100 percent of sales benefit its charity partner. Since the company began the Month of Giving six years ago, Jersey Mike's has raised over \$14 million for local charities.

**Being affiliated with the Burn Foundation has really opened my eyes to what's right here in our back yard. I am amazed at how many people the Foundation touches.**

In Eric's case, Southeastern Firefighters Burn Foundation was the logical charity of choice for his first Jersey Mike's store in 2011. His sister, Jamie, was a nurse at the Joseph M. Still Burn Center, so Eric was aware of the mission and services that the Burn Foundation provides to burn patients and families. Prior to owning Jersey Mike's Subs stores Eric sponsored Burn Foundation events. Since opening his first store in 2011, Eric's companies have contributed over \$60,000 to the Burn Foundation.

Eric, a native of Martinez, became a member of the Burn Foundation's Board of Directors in 2015. He and his wife, Sandi, who are parents of two sons, also help provide meals to the Chavis House families as members of Grace Baptist Church in Evans. "Being affiliated with the Burn Foundation has really opened my eyes to what's right here in our back yard. I am amazed at how many people the Foundation touches," shared Eric.

Eric, his partner, Jason Wren, and his Operations Manager, Stephen Carter, have no plans to slow down. Plans are underway to have a total of 10 stores in the Aiken/Augusta/Thomson market and then expand into other markets. This is not only good news for the Burn Foundation, but also the local economy. Currently, the local Jersey Mike's stores employ about 85 people, many who are students. Eric sees this as an opportunity to be a positive influence to those younger and encourage them in whatever they do, whether serving a sandwich or taking out the trash, they can make a difference. It's the Jersey Mike's way.



## DONOR LEVELS



### \$2500 Founder

Provides antibiotics and pain medication for 25 patients.



### \$1000 Inner Circle

Provides transportation for follow-up care for 10 burn patients.



### \$500 Partner

Provides one month's supply of toiletries & paper products at the Chavis House.



### \$250 Champion

Provides anti-scarring garments for one burn patient.



### \$100 Guardian

Provides two nights' lodging at the Chavis House.



### \$50 Family

Provides one car seat for a pediatric burn patient's return home.



### \$25 Friend

Provides clothing for a burn patient upon discharge from the hospital.

Become a BFF today online at [www.sfbf.net](http://www.sfbf.net), by calling 1.800.650.BURN, or by completing & mailing in the envelope in this newsletter.



# BURN FOUNDATION FRIENDS

This list reflects BFF donations received from January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015. We apologize for any errors or omissions.

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Brandi, Inc.  
Chris Calvert  
Columbia County Fire and Rescue  
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Beth and Michael Frits  
Garrett Fulcher  
Charles Gertler  
Alice and Clayton Hallmark  
Donna Harris  
Kim and Keith Hutto  
Jodi Lott  
Achara Marshall  
Jeanette and Ron Clark Padmenik  
Elaine Rambo  
Virginia Walker  
Donna Woo

**In Memory of Ruthann Como**

Bonnie Gartsu  
Nancy Martin

**In Memory of T.W. Dean**

Janie Bowles  
Fun Time Squares Square Dance Club  
Ann Hingst  
Adam Jones  
Mr. and Mrs. Tommy Morgan  
Carole Wilson

**In Memory of Bill Dolley**

Cheryl and John Dauer  
Marlene Inman  
Meta M. Hollins

**In Memory of Harvey Gilmore**

Donna Davis  
Melody and Steve Morgan  
Dan Speight  
Janice and Gray Turner  
Vienna Church of God

**In Memory of Lee Harris, Jr.**

Steve Doster  
Harris Farm & Home Supply, Inc.  
Lee Harris, Sr.  
Pinehurst Fire Department

**In Memory of Michael Hawkins**  
Nancy and Douglas Hawkins

**In Memory of Wilton Persons, Jr.**  
Southside Fire EMS

**In Memory of Kollen Stacker**

Marcia Dowty  
Daniel Stacker  
Sharon Stacker

**In Memory of Bettye Tallent**

Brenda Chandler  
Joseph Cooley  
Charlotte Edmonds  
Marie Grogan  
Edwina and Floyd O'Neal  
Rebecca Rosborough  
Sean Rogers and Family  
Patricia and Otis Screws  
Trinity on the Hill United  
Methodist Church

Waynesboro Masonic Lodge

## Fire departments throughout Georgia and South Carolina, support SFBF through:



aluminum can recycling



boot drives



golf tournaments

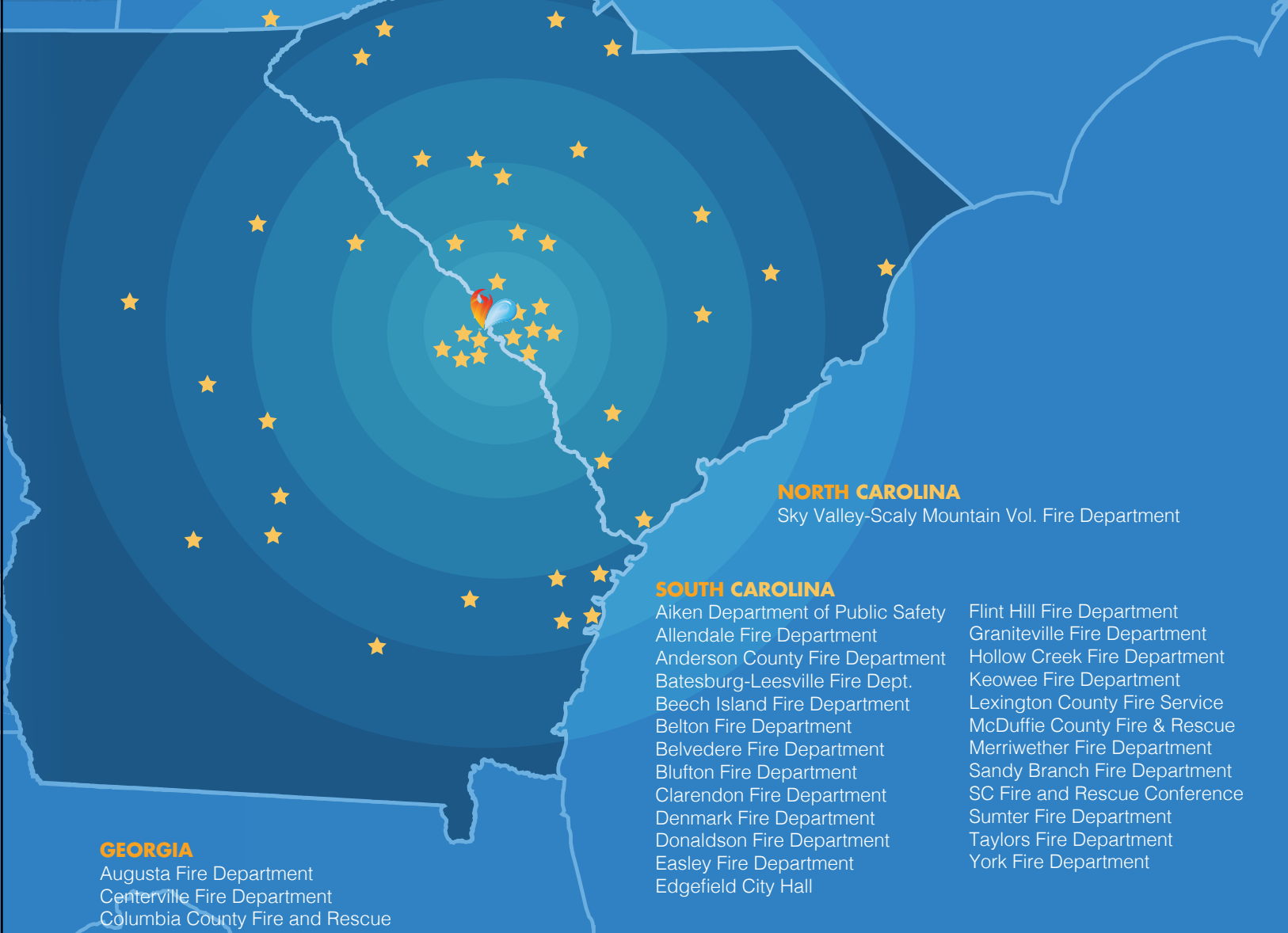


bike rides



other special events

# Firefighters are our bffs



### NORTH CAROLINA

Sky Valley-Scaly Mountain Vol. Fire Department

### SOUTH CAROLINA

Aiken Department of Public Safety  
Allendale Fire Department  
Anderson County Fire Department  
Batesburg-Leesville Fire Dept.  
Beech Island Fire Department  
Belton Fire Department  
Belvedere Fire Department  
Bluffton Fire Department  
Clarendon Fire Department  
Denmark Fire Department  
Donaldson Fire Department  
Easley Fire Department  
Edgefield City Hall

Flint Hill Fire Department  
Graniteville Fire Department  
Hollow Creek Fire Department  
Keowee Fire Department  
Lexington County Fire Service  
McDuffie County Fire & Rescue  
Merriwether Fire Department  
Sandy Branch Fire Department  
SC Fire and Rescue Conference  
Sumter Fire Department  
Taylors Fire Department  
York Fire Department

### GEORGIA

Augusta Fire Department  
Centerville Fire Department  
Columbia County Fire and Rescue  
Commerce Fire Department  
Drayton Fire Department  
Garden City Fire Department  
Gray Fire Department  
Grovetown Fire Department  
Hephzibah Fire Department  
Hortense Volunteer Fire Department  
Hull Volunteer Fire Department  
Pinehurst Fire Department  
Port Wentworth  
Professional Firefighters of GA  
Richmond Hill Fire Department  
Southside Fire/ EMS/ Security  
Thomson Fire Department  
Vienna Fire Department  
Waycross Fire Department



## First Hand Knowledge

Jodie Jernigan, of Savannah, remembers being in Augusta in 1995 spending time consoling her friend, Pam Seebeck, while Pam's husband, Stevie, was a patient in the burn unit. Back then there was no Chavis House and families had little choice but to sleep in a waiting room. Pam slept on hard, vinyl orange benches night after night while Stevie laid connected to life support down the hall. After two months he died as a result of the burn injuries he sustained in a car accident. The accident also claimed the life of their son.

**Back then there was no Chavis House and families had little choice but to sleep in a waiting room.**

Those memories continue to resonate with Jodie in her career as a certified firefighter and EMS provider. Currently, she serves as Public Relations Coordinator and Director of Communications for Southside Fire/EMS in Savannah. Part of her time is spent managing the dispatcher calls to firefighters and EMS staff; the other is used to organize events for her community, including fire prevention lessons for children in area schools.

Jodie also spearheads fundraisers for the Southeastern Firefighters Burn Foundation. Two primary fundraisers are the Savannah Women's Show and the popular Southside Fire/EMS annual calendar, which features local firefighters. Nearly \$12,000 was raised in 2016 from these two events.

Jodie knows first hand the importance in supporting the Burn Foundation, not only from her friend's tragedy, but also from her own experience as a mother. Three years ago her son, Jason, was burned on the face while opening the radiator of his car. She recalls traveling to and from Augusta so that Dr. Fred Mullins could treat him. "He's doing great – you can't even tell that he was burned," shared Jodie.

"What the Burn Foundation does is such a blessing," explained Jodie. "Twenty years ago when my friend passed away, all the families slept in a tiny waiting room. It's a big relief for families to have some place to go and not have to worry about what to eat and where to sleep."

Recently Jodie became a member of the Board of Directors for the Burn Foundation. Her personal and professional experience with the Burn Center and Burn Foundation will be a great asset to the organization. Jodie and her husband, Roger, have four adult sons and four grandchildren. They enjoy spending time with their growing family, fishing and hunting.



southeastern  
firefighters  
burn foundation

## Patient Care SERVICE'S DATA



**\$38,884** spent in  
**TRANSPORTATION** for  
**Burn Patients**



**12,915** Guest **MEALS** served

(Over 70 churches and local organizations donated 12,915 meals valued at **\$115,589**)



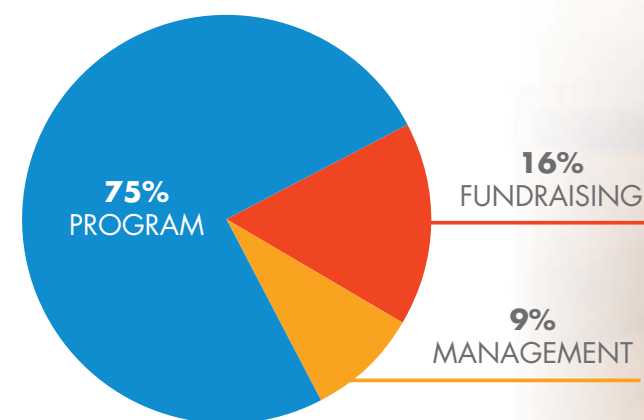
**\$22,440** spent on  
**PRESCRIPTIONS**



**1,148** received  
**FREE LODGING**  
through the  
**Chavis House**

### SUMMARY OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2015





burn foundation *friend*

## Become Our BFF

As a Burn Foundation Friend, your donation will help provide free lodging and meals for families of burn patients who are hospitalized at the Joseph M. Still Burn Center. BFFs support the operation of the Chavis House and transitional services for burn survivors.

For \$25 you can become a BFF. Display your BFF membership decal proudly on the window of your car, home, or office. Let others know that you are a Burn Foundation Friend making a difference in the lives of burn patients and families!

Tel: (706) 650-BURN

Toll-free: (800) 650-BURN

[www.sfbf.net](http://www.sfbf.net)



3614 J. Dewey Gray Circle, Bldg. C  
Augusta, GA 30909



CHRIS CALVERT



## 2015 Top Fundraising BFF Champion

**Chris has raised over \$23,000 for the Burn Foundation**

Chris Calvert has been our top BFF Champion fundraiser the past three years. Since the BFF program began in 2013, Chris has raised over \$23,000 for the Burn Foundation. Chris owns Access Spine, a company that provides medical equipment for the Burn Center. Chris and his wife, Emily, are the parents of a daughter and are expecting their second child soon.