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Food, Fun and Fire

Hope for Firefighters Event in Downtown Aims to Raise \$150,000

by Richard Guzmán

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DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - No one doubts the life saving skills of local firefighters. But this week, they'll be showing off something almost as important: how they cook up firehouse favorites.

The 13th annual Hope for Firefighters takes place Thursday, June 3, from 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. on Hope Street between Third Street and Hope Place. The event raises money for the Los Angeles Firemen's Relief Association's Widows, Orphans and Disabled Firemen's Fund.

The event will feature appearances by Los Angeles Kings players, actress Alisa Reyes of Nickelodeon's "All That," a firefighter photo booth, raffles, live music and more. A highlight will be the popular "muster" games, where more than 20 corporate teams compete in events such as the bucket brigade, the firefighter suit-up and a hose pull contest.

Also making an appearance this year is Wilshire the Fire Dog, a Dalmatian rescued by Fire Station 29 in the Mid-City area after a girl took him there because she could no longer keep him in her small apartment.

"It'll be an amazing afternoon of fun, laughter, good food, good music and some sporting competition from the muster games," said Steve Robinson, co-chair of the event, which is expected to attract about 15,000 people.

He said organizers hope to pull in about \$150,000. Last year's event raised \$126,000.

While the muster games and Wilshire the dog will entertain attendees, one of the biggest crowd pleasers is the food prepared by the firefighters. About 25 firehouses will compete in a cook-off in categories including Best Food, Best Dessert and Best Booth Decor.

"The firefighters are creating a taste of the firehouses," said Robinson. "One station is bringing in a spicy shrimp taco, and of course there will be things like tri-tip sandwiches and other firefighter food. It's also firefighter portions, so bring your appetite."

Paul Linton, the founder of the event, said he is looking forward to the general ambience of the afternoon, when everyone gathers to help those who make a living helping their community.

"It's a win-win for everyone involved, from the firemen to corporate sponsors to the people on the street," Linton said. "It's gratifying knowing you're helping firefighters."

Hope for Firefighters is Thursday, June 3, from 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. on Hope Street between Third Street and Hope Place, (310) 237-6430 or hopeforfirefighters.org.

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