



Purpose: The First Responders Children's Foundation (FRCF) stands as a pillar of support for first responders, acting as their 'first responders' in times of need. We believe that every child of a first responder deserves the chance to realize their fullest potential. It's our conviction that first responders should feel confident that they have steadfast support behind them. We express our profound gratitude to first responders by dedicating our efforts to support their children, ensuring that while they protect and care for our communities, their children are also cared for.

History: FRCF was founded in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 to support the 800 children who lost a first responder parent on that tragic day. Through emergencies, fires and natural disasters, first responders are always there for us in our time of need. Over the last 23 years, the Foundation has grown into a national nonprofit that helps children of first responders and their families heal, grow, and thrive in the wake of hardship, injury, and tragedy.

Vision: Today, we offer emergency financial hardship support, bereavement grants, mental health support, scholarships, and natural disaster aid to help alleviate the challenges that first responder children face daily. We also have robust community engagement programs that help first responders forge lasting relationships that build trust, inspire futures, and strengthen the bonds between communities and public safety agencies across the U.S.

Since 2001, we have impacted more than 700,000 families and 1.4 million children through our direct service, grants, and community engagement programs. Our vision is to expand those programs in Kern County, impacting thousands of first responder families.

The Need: We don't often realize how what happens to first responders on the job affects their children. First responders are the first ones on the scene when people find themselves in desperate situations, while their children stand by and watch their parents willingly run into harm's way in the communities they serve. Their sacrifices take a toll on some of our most dedicated first responders emotionally, financially, and physically. These national statistics support the needs for our programs:

- 70% of fire fighters, EMTs, and paramedics are unpaid volunteers. This fact becomes a financial burden when it comes time to send their children to a four-year college that cost on average over \$100,000.
- Over the last three years, there were more than 1,300 Line of Duty Deaths and more than 575 suicides in the first responder community. When a hero dies either by their own hands or someone else's, the family is left with a daunting financial and emotional burden.
- First responder children are at a higher risk of experiencing depression and anxiety as they worry about whether their first responder parent will return home from the job.

Impact in Kern County: In recent years, we have served 25 children of first responders in Kern County through our Mental Health and Scholarship programs. We have also distributed over 1,500 toys through our Toy Express community activation events.

In an effort to deepen our impact, FRCF leadership traveled to Bakersfield and met with the Bakersfield Police Dept.; Bakersfield Fire Dept.; Kern County Sheriff's Office; California Highway Patrol; and the Kern County Fire Dept. In addition, we have engaged representatives from State Assemblyman, Vince Fong, Senator Shannon Grove, and Senator Melissa Hurtado's offices as well as leaders from Adventist Health, Citizens Business Bank, Hoffman Hospice, and California State University, Bakersfield. Together with local first responder agencies, corporate supporters, and governmental influencers, FRCF can expand our reach and impact as well as provide much-needed support to children of first responders in Kern County.

For more information on how to support FRCF programs in Kern County, please contact Randy Acosta at racosta@1strcf.org or (410) 937-2986.