

REPORT OF THE AVON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

MELISSA GUGLIOTTI, *President* / JAMES DIPACE, *Chief*

Incorporated in 1943, the Avon Volunteer Fire Department proudly protects more than 18,400 people living in the 22.6 square mile area that makes up the Town of Avon. The Department's mission is to provide fire suppression and prevention, life safety and rescue support, as well as other emergency community support to the citizens of the Town of Avon. In addition, the Department provides mutual aid support to those surrounding communities that, in time of need, may request such assistance.

Staffed entirely by volunteers, the Avon Volunteer Fire Department prides itself on the selflessness and dedication of its 159 members – 60 Firefighters, 13 Fire Police, 34 Veteran Members, 18 Explorers, and 34 Lifetime Members, all of whom play a vital role in the safety of Avon. The Department operates six companies and 15 pieces of apparatus, including a brush truck, ladder truck, tanker, rescue vehicle, boat, and pumpers. Four stations are located throughout Town – Company 1 on Darling Drive, Company 2 on Secret Lake Road, Company 3 on West Avon Road, and Company 4 on Huckleberry Hill Road.

The Avon Volunteer Fire Department responds to well over 500 calls each year – everything from fires to hazardous materials incidents to motor vehicle accidents and other emergencies. Beyond responding to calls, receiving training, and attending meetings, AVFD volunteers are out in the community giving back in other ways. Members of the Department are actively involved with various education, fire prevention, and charitable programs throughout the community.

Education - Fire Safety programs are part of the curriculum at Pine Grove and Roaring Brook elementary schools and are also presented at fairs, sporting contests, daycare centers, and nursery schools throughout Town. As part of Avon Day festivities each year, it provides fire safety information for all ages.



A program of the Avon Fire Marshall's office in conjunction with the Avon Volunteer Fire Department, the poster contest was held from October 1-November 30, 2009. Fourth grade students at Pine Grove and Roaring Brook schools were eligible to enter poster designs illustrating the theme "Fire Prevention By Everyone Every Day." Pictured is winner Chloe Miller from Roaring Brook School.

Annual Food Drive - On September 12, the AVFD sponsored its second annual food drive to benefit the Avon Food Pantry. Volunteers from the AVFD collected non-perishable food items at Stop & Shop on the Avon/Simsbury line and then delivered the items to the Avon Food Pantry. The AVFD collected 3,182 pounds of food and raised \$1,542 for the Avon Food Pantry, a 22 percent increase over 2008's 2,500 pounds of

food collected and a 155 percent increase in cash and gift card contributions.

Halloween Party - In cooperation with the Avon Recreation & Park Department, the AVFD presented "A Halloween Parade" for pre-school through fifth grade children (and their parents) at Pine Grove Elementary School. Children came dressed in their favorite costumes, and the event featured the entertainment of Illusionist Dan Bowen as well as prizes, games, refreshments, and goody bags. Pictured are: AVFD firefighter Steve Johnson showing Haley Lauer (dressed as Cinderella)



how to operate a fire hose while Caroline Hart (dressed as Pocahontas) and Erika Nguyen (dressed as a cheerleader) await their turns.

Blood Drive - According to the American Red Cross, every minute of every day, someone needs blood. That blood can only come from volunteer donors and it's the mission of the American Red Cross to maintain a safe blood supply. Recognizing this, the AVFD held a "Battle of the Badges" blood drive. The friendly competition to see whether the Fire Department of Police Department could bring in more aid for the American Red Cross drew nearly 80 donors.

Citizen's Fire Academy - For those who've ever wondered what an Avon Volunteer Firefighter does, the AVFD holds an annual Citizens Fire Academy. Students learn how to put on firefighter's gear, use a fire hose, and rescue a victim during a mock automobile accident.

The AVFD is funded primarily through the Town of Avon's operating budget. In addition, the Department conducts an annual raffle. In 2009, raffle proceeds were used to purchase a Duty Officer vehicle. Raffle proceeds also help provide volunteer recognition events for the membership as well as enable the purchase of equipment, such as Firefighter Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), or "gear" that is not fully funded by the municipal budget. It costs nearly \$3,000 to outfit a firefighter in a bunker coat, pants, helmet, boots, and hood. When repairs can be made to existing gear, the AVFD makes them. However, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has set a standard that no gear be over 10 years old, so purchasing new equipment is mandatory.

Over the past 67 years, almost 700 Avon residents have donated their time with the Avon Volunteer Fire Department, and the Department is constantly looking for dedicated volunteers to help with fire fighting, rescue, and administration. To learn more, please call (860) 677-2644 or stop by the Company 1 firehouse located at 25 Darling Drive any Monday evening after 7:00.

