

happening this month

Sarasota goes Pink on September 27 “Pink Heals Tour” supports those with Cancer

Men in pink, pink fire trucks...*say who..?* Well, it's true five pink fire trucks are coming to Sarasota on September 27 and from the organizers to the firemen to the volunteers, men are a big part of this special pink-themed event. The reason these wildly colored trucks will be rumbling into town and will be placed at various locations in Sarasota is to drive home an important point: the fight against breast cancer.

While October is typically “Breast Cancer Awareness month” this opportunity to show unity behind this vital cause was something Sarasota County Fire Chief Kenneth Ellerbe just couldn't say no to. He met three women who were active with Team Believe as part of the Susan G. Komen “Walk for the Cure” soon after he arrived in June 2009 to become Sarasota's Fire Chief.

He asked if he and his fellow firefighters could help and they did — buying t-shirts and getting behind the cause and because, he adds, “We have members who have been impacted by cancer and it was an opportunity for all of us to engage in support for them as well as many others. I have seen the shock, surprise and fear that cancer inspires. I want us to be on the opposite side of that fear, inspiring our community to become aware of how prevalent the challenge is and how it affects all of us.”

The Chief contacted Dave Graybill back in November when he found out that “there was such a thing as a pink fire truck!” He recalls when he got their schedule, “I talked with the members of Team Believe and we took it from there.” He called together a variety of men and women from various walks of life and professions to bring the event to light. Meetings have taken place over the summer and the enthusiasm of the committee has grown week by week.

First some background. The Pink Heals Tour as it's called, was started by Dave Graybill, a firefighter from Glendale, Arizona. The tour is done by the “Guardians of the Ribbon,” an organization that drives pink fire trucks across the United States to support women in their fight against cancer and inspire men to get involved. Graybill has a group of working firemen who travel all over the country in pink fire trucks and, it should be noted, pink fire suits, using their own vacation days to spread their message. Their purpose: “raising awareness for the fight against cancer and inspire men to support the women of their community.”

Why firefighters? “It's in our nature to fight for those who have lost the ability to fight for themselves and we are asking the public for support. It will not only bring us together, but also give those who are battling this disease a feeling of hope.”

The popularity of the tour has grown so much that this year they will be traveling to 50 plus locations from Colorado to Indiana to Florida to Pennsylvania with a lot of stops in between. Last year's campaign raised \$206,958 total that stays in each community where they stop. Money raised on September 27 via items sold goes to the local American Cancer Society, the Sarasota County Firefighter's Benevolent Fund and Team Believe for breast cancer research, education, patient advocacy and services.

Joining Chief Ellerbe are some of his fire fighters like Sean Murphy, Ron Evans, Matt Flynn, James Mattered, Bond Poire, Mike Martino and Thomas Bonner as well as a committee that includes women such as Bambi Famous Kaine (who is also Event Chair of the American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer event taking place in October), Amy Tuten with ABC News, Joann Hampton, Kelly Abercrombie, Gina Damico and Louise Bruderle of *West Coast Woman* (to name a few, but not all).

September 27 starts with a parade downtown with a police escort at 10 a.m. that runs through Main Street to Marina Jack's and then three of the five pink trucks will divert to multiple locations throughout Sarasota. Once at those locations, firefighters and volunteers will be selling a brand new calendar made up of — you guessed it — area firefighters.



At 9 p.m. all five trucks will reconvene for the “grand finale” at Westfield Sarasota Square for a variety of events including a “Preferred Pink shopping day.”

According to Bambi, “We would like to have as many breast cancer survivors adorned in pink as part of this historic event. We'd like them to consider walking along with the pink trucks. Of course we also would welcome any and all participation from vendors, sponsors, ideas, schools, etc.”

Bambi, a three-year breast cancer survivor, calls September 27 “an inspiring event.” If you want to get involved, call Bambi at **780-6422** or email her at **bfamous@gmail.com**.



above: A hard working committee of firefighters and community movers and shakers has been working hard to bring the Pink Heals Tour to Sarasota on Sept. 27. Some of the committee members include (l-r) Kevin Dillon, Bambi Famous Kaine, Sarasota County Fire Chief Kenneth Ellerbe, Amy Tuten, Deb Shuster, Tom Bonner, Joann Hampton and Ron Evans.

Image by Evelyn England

Pink in Sarasota

● **Monday, September 27: 10-11 a.m.:**

Pink fire truck parade through Main Street: Pink Heals trucks, Sarasota Co. Fire and Police Department, breast cancer survivors, etc.

● **11 a.m.** Rally at Marina Jack's with the five pink trucks. Three trucks will divert to multiple locations throughout Sarasota, one to Bradenton and the other to North Port. Stops will include:

- > Siesta Key
- > St. Armands
- > Sarasota Memorial Hospital
- > Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute
- > North County Library: Booker Elementary
- > Gold's Gym
- > Bonefish Grill 41
- > Hooters
- > New Balance
- > Doctor's Hospital
- > Firehouse Subs
- > Marina Jack's
- > Firehouse Subs
- > Westfield Sarasota Square

● **Grand finale:** all five trucks will convene at Westfield Mall (Sarasota Square) 6-9 p.m. where there are plans for a “Preferred Pink” shopping day with a “Pink Passport” and a “Pink up the Pace” mall-walker event plus lots more.

Dates for the 2010 Pink Heals Tour

In August they were in Phoenix, Denver, Bismarck, Minneapolis, and Madison, WI. Here's the rest of the tour schedule:

● **SEPTEMBER**

- 2nd - Terra Haute IN
- 4th - Kokomo IN
- 6th - Nancy Run Fire PA
- 7th - Washington DC
- 9th - Virginia Beach VA
- 11th - High Point NC
- 12th - Florence SC
- 14th - Jacksonville
- 16th - Daytona Beach
- 17th - Orlando
- 19th - West Palm
- 20th - Deerfield Beach
- 21st - Ft. Lauderdale
- 23rd - Miami
- 25th - Naples
- 26th - Fort Myers
- 27th - Sarasota**
- 28th - St. Pete/Clearwater
- 29th - Tampa

● **OCTOBER**

- 1st - Tallahassee
- 3rd - Memphis
- 5th - Tyler TX
- 6th - Lufkin TX
- 8th - Baytown TX
- 9-10th - Corpus Christi
- 12th - New Braunfels TX
- 13th - San Marcos
- 14th - Killeen TX
- 15th - Georgetown TX
- 16th - Grapevine TX
- 18th - Abilene TX
- 20th - McKinney TX
- 21st - Tulsa OK evening event
- 22-24th - Wentzville MO
- 25th - Columbus MO
- 26th - Kansas City, KA
- 28-31st - North Las Vegas Homecoming



For More Information: About the Pink Fire Trucks
Dave Graybill • dgraybill911@yahoo.com • 602-380-8714
www.pinkheals.com • www.pinkfiretrucks.org