



Letter from the Secretary --

Dear Parents,

Artesia 9/11 Memorial, Inc., a nonprofit corporation, was formed in 2020. First and foremost, our mission is based on the premise that 'We Will Never Forget!' Within our chosen platform, we have set goals to raise funds should any of our firefighters/EMTs find themselves experiencing financial personal crises. So when they get the call, at any given time, they can perform at their absolute best ... to save what others are losing!

In July 2020, our President, Fire Chief Kevin Hope, came to the Board and shared a story of one of our own whose daughter was born many, many weeks premature. A rookie at the time, Firefighter Baeza, every minute he was not on duty, he was traveling to and from ABQ to relieve his wife who had been at their daughter's bedside. While on duty, he did what every firefighter does, put his personal issues aside to focus on the job at hand. His expenses in Artesia didn't disappear. The monumental expenses he was incurring in ABQ only increased with each passing day little Knovah was hospitalized. "This is why we're here! THIS is why," said Chief Hope. That same day, cash was hand-delivered to him in ABQ. It wasn't a lot but, as Firefighter Baeza stated, "This is lifechanging! Thank you!"

In January of 2021, our organization wanted to do something to somehow commemorate 9/11, since 2021 marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the terrorist attacks on America. We reached out to Tunnel to Towers and inquired about bringing the 9/11 NEVER FORGET Mobile Exhibit to Artesia. "We'll never be able to bring that exhibit all the way from NY to little Artesia, New Mexico!", I replied. Chief stated, "Make the call." In June of 2021, for four days, three members of the FDNY accompanied driver Billy Puckett and the 1100 sq. ft. mobile exhibit to Artesia, NM from Staten Island, NY.

During the planning stages of this Exhibit, tragedy struck at the heart of our community ... our very own Cpl. Thomas Frazier was killed in an automobile collision on May 21<sup>st</sup>. Tunnel to Towers was contacted so we could let them know that we needed to take a step back for a few days from planning the arrival of the Mobile Exhibit in order to plan transport and assist in funeral arrangements for Frazier. I immediately received a call back from them, notifying us that Frazier's widow and his three children were eligible for their Fallen First Responder Home Program, which ultimately paid off the Frazier's mortgage.

We are steadfast in continuing our work. We proudly advocate for Tunnel to Towers' newest program to eradicate veteran homelessness, an initiative in which tiny homes are built for homeless veterans across the country.

This brings us to our special guests: Kristie Kiernan Bouryal, CEO and author – 'Discovering Heroes' Series and VP of Marketing & Communications for Tunnel to Towers. Our second special guest is Lt. John Kiernan (ret.), FDNY Elite Rescue Unit and 9/11 First Responder.

This Memorial weekend, our organization is hosting New Mexico's first Guns & Hoses Charity Softball Game – Police vs. Fire. Our students are a large and important part of our community. We are asking parents to allow your child or children to participate in this event as we honor our community's fallen first responders. Our organization proudly spreads 9/11 education to our youth as we provide age-appropriate reading material, along with corresponding curricula, with high hopes of introduction into our school system. We truly hope you, as parents, see the need to educate our children about 9/11, the tragedies of that dreadful day, but more importantly, the heroes we discovered along the way and how our nation became ONE nation, united, under God.

Please join us on May 28<sup>th</sup> for a day of celebration and remembrance, for ALL first responders who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

  
**DEBBIE BRAZAS** | Artesia 9/11 Memorial, Inc.