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Barren Hill Volunteer Fire Company



2023 Annual Report

BHVFC 2023 Annual Report



PRIDE ~ HONOR COURAGE ~INTEGRITY SERVICE ~ TRADITION RESPECT ~ ACCOUNTABILITY The Members of the Barren Hill Volunteer Fire Company are pleased to offer our 2023 Annual Report for review. In this year's report, we take a look at another year of service, commitment, and dedication by our Volunteers to our Community. Each year we prepare this report, we are left in awe of the thousands of hours of sacrifice afforded to our Community by our Volunteers. The repeated sentiment is that our Volunteers regularly drop what they are doing to respond to our neighbors' calls for help!

New for this year, we have added volunteer spotlights throughout the report. On those slides, we take time to introduce you to our volunteers who are neighbors, friends, parents, and career professionals. We are always looking to add members to our Family! Maybe 2024 is the year that you take the easy step to come by and learn what it means to be part of a Volunteer Fire Company. There is something for everyone in our Fire Company; not everyone runs into burning buildings! Stop by the Firehouse and say hello! It will likely be the best decision you have ever made.

At the end of the report, we highlight some exciting information that is ahead of us in 2024. The future is bright at the Barren Hill Volunteer Fire Company. We are grateful for the Community support and look forward to our continued partnerships!

We are so honored to serve Whitemarsh Township and look forward to 2024!

MISSION

The mission of the Barren Hill Volunteer Fire Company is to provide Fire and Rescue Services to Whitemarsh Township and surrounding communities in a safe, effective, efficient, and professional manner.

VISION

The vision of the Barren Hill Volunteer Fire Company is to maintain our commitment to providing professional Fire & Rescue Services to Whitemarsh Township and the surrounding communities, while evolving with the ever-changing physical and technological demands of the Fire Service in a humble, proud and transparent manner.

> **Proudly serving Whitemarsh Township and the** Surrounding Communities since 1915

Mission **&** Vision **PRIDE** ~ HONOR COURAGE ~INTEGRITY SERVICE ~ TRADITION RESPECT ~ ACCOUNTABILITY

CORE VALUES

Pride

The opportunity to be part of and uphold the legacy of the Barren Hill Volunteer Fire Company and the Fire Service

Honor

Adherence to what is right, honesty and respect in our actions and behaviors at all times in our service to the Community

Service

Performance and Duty, regardless of day or night, and without question to our Community

Respect

Accepting our Community, our Volunteers and our Staff for who they are, what we represent and the unique talents each has to offer

Tradition

Courage

head on in our daily operations and service to the Community

Integrity

Being honest and possessing strong moral principles; doing what is

right even when no one is looking

Strength to be a Volunteer for our Community and face opposition

Upholding the legacy, beliefs and ideals of those that came before us who cleared the path for success

Accountability

Maintaining the high moral, ethical and operational standards and expectations of our Community and the Fire Service

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Shel Klein

Firefighter Klein has volunteered at BHVFC for thirty-three (33) years. Firefighter Klein has served as a Company Officer for thirty (30) of those years as a line officer up to Deputy Chief and the current Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Firefighter Klein is a retired grocer with two (2) children, and four (4) grandchildren; all of whom also reside in Whitemarsh Township



OPERATIONS OFFICERS

Fire Chief Chris Schwartz Deputy Chief Renard Rose Assistant Chief Scott Yoder Battalion Chief Joseph "Bucky" Swider Captain Jamie Viall Captain Shaun Maher Lieutenant Pat Gaffney Safety Officer Tim Tygh Health & Safety Officer Pat DiCicco *Passed Away June 21, 2023* **Chief Engineer Tom Lyons Fire Police Captain Scott Rotenbury**

> Our Operations officers have served the community for a combined 282 years. Fire Chief Chris Schwartz has led our operational leaders since 2008.

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25 Years of Service 24 Years of Service 28 Years of Service **26 Years of Service 21 Years of Service 23 Years of Service 10 Years of Service** 22 Years of Service **30 Years of Service** 24 Years of Service **49 Years of Service** 2023 Operations Officers



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2023 Administrative **Officers**

President Renard Rose 24 Years of Service Vice President Joseph "Bucky" Swider **26 Years of Service Secretary Semeion Hall 3 Years of Service Treasurer Eli Anselm 4** Years of Service **BOARD OF TRUSTEES Chairman Shel Klein 33 Years of Service Scott Yoder 29 Years of Service** Jamie Viall 21 Years of Service **Mike Gaffney 24 Years of Service Dave Cox 18 Years of Service 30 Years of Service Pat DiCicco** **Passed Away June 21, 2023** **Pat Gaffney 10 Years of Service Cameron Smith** **Elected to Fulfill Trustee DiCicco's Remaining Term** **32 Years of Service**

Our Administrative officers have served the community for a combined 254 years. President Renard Rose has led our administrative leaders since 2014.

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ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS



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Jamie Viall

Captain Viall has volunteered at BHVFC for the last twenty-one (21) years. Captain Viall has held many positions in the fire company, including Lieutenant and Captain in the Fire Brigade and Secretary and Trustee on the administrative side of the Company. Captain Viall is responsible for all fire prevention activities in which the Fire Company participates. **"Barren Hill has become a second home to me and my family and has brought me a great source of pride and purpose in my life. I love supporting the Whitemarsh Township Community."**

SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES...

Firefighters, Fire Police Officers, Fundraising, Rescue Technicians, Junior Firefighters (14-17yoa), Photographer, Administrative Members, **Community Events**

The only decision.....Why not YOU!

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FIRE CO

ORGANIZED1915



barrenhill.com/volunteer

JOIN OUR FAMILY

Our doors are open. There is room at our table. The only thing missing is YOU!



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BHVFC 2023 Annual Report



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2023 Run Statistics



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RESPECT ~ ACCOUNTABILITY

2023 Run Statistics

Calls for Service	552
Midnight Calls	61
Weekly Training Exercises	49
Special Services	88
Fire Police Callouts	41
Fire Officer Investigations	16
Company Business Meetings	12
Board of Trustee Meetings	12

BHVFC 2023 Annual Report



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Grant Atherholt

Firefighter Atherholt joined the Barren Hill Fire Company in February 2022, after moving to Whitemarsh Township from the City of Philadelphia the previous fall. Firefighter Atherholt works in product management for a Tech Company in the cybersecurity space. In his free time, Firefighter Atherholt enjoys exploring trails with his dog and hosting cookouts for family and friends.



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Members are dispatched through the Montgomery County Emergency Dispatch Center in Eagleville, Pennsylvania. Both ten digit and 911 calls are received into the Dispatch Center and the resources are then deployed.

Members are alerted to a call for service by various means. Digital paging, cellular telephone applications, and the house siren alert our Volunteers who respond to the Firehouse.

Regardless of how the alert is received, members stop what they are doing to respond to our Community's emergency call for service. 10-digit and 911 calls are received at the Dispatch Center,

2023 Five Hundred, Fifty-Two (552) Calls for Service

Estimated Total # of Calls for Service Hours: 4,797 Volunteer Hours

Proudly serving Whitemarsh Township and the Surrounding Communities since 1915 2023 Calls for Service



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2023 Calls for Service

This chart shows the 10-year comparison of calls for service at BHVFC. The significance of 2023's five hundred, and fifty-two (552) calls for service is that there were no significant storm events. In a typical year, significant storm events contribute to an increased call volume when one storm event produces in excess of ten responses in a short period of time. This type of event was not experienced in 2023.



2023 Calls for Service – Call Type

Calls for service are broken down into six (6) categories. Building Fires, Non-Building Fires, Rescues, EMS Assists, Alarm Systems, and all Others. Responses to alarm systems account for the highest percentage of responses.

Fire alarms may be activated for legitimate reasons, such as smoke from burnt food, or for non-legitimate reasons, such as a system malfunction. Like most utility and mechanical systems in a residence or business, it is a good practice to have your alarm system serviced annually.



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- Other Gas Leaks Inside / Outside, Vehicle Accident Stand-Bys, Etc.
- Non-Building Fires Wires Outside, Trash, Brush, & Vehicle Fires, Etc.



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Prakash Bhuyan

Firefighter Bhuyan is has volunteered at the Barren HilL Fire Company since 2015. Firefighter Bhuyan, better known as "Doc," is an infectious disease specialist with more than twenty (20) years of medical and scientific experience. He is currently a Chief Medical Officer for a small biotech company focused on developing pandemic and epidemic countermeasures. Previously, he was the head of Clinical Development for Vaccines and Immune Therapies at a major manufacturer. "Doc" has resided in Lafayette Hill for more than twenty (20) years with his wife and children.



BHVFC 2023 Annual Report **Responses by** Day of Week PRIDE ~ HONOR

COURAGE ~INTEGRITY SERVICE ~ TRADITION RESPECT ~ ACCOUNTABILITY

BHVFC 2023 Annual Report **Responses by**

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Midnight (12a-6a) Calls for Service ~ 10 Year Comparison



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Fire Police Only Calls ~ 10 Year Comparison

Fire Police provide traffic and crowd control on emergency scenes or special events.
BHVFC's Fire Police not only participate in local events but also provide support to many of the area's Fire Police Units.

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Semeion Hall

Firefighter Hall joined the Barren Hill Fire Company family in 2021. Firefighter Hall is married, lives in the City of Philadelphia, and works in Law Enforcement. Firefighter Hall currently serves as the Secretary of the Fire Company. In his off time, Firefighter Hall enjoys all things music, target shooting, weightlifting, traveling, and studying the bible. Firefighter Hall is passionate about the brotherhood/sisterhood of the Fire Service, as well as the training and leadership at the Barren Hill Fire Company.





The Township is broken up into sections that are called "Boxes". BHVFC's response District contains thirteen (13) boxes. The purpose of the box system is to ensure that the closest available resources are dispatched and utilized throughout the response District. Within each box, certain addresses are identified as "target hazards" and assigned the box number with an associated letter. (i.e. 32-20A) A target hazard is a location that requires special considerations for firefighting operations due to occupancy, hazardous materials, or other similar factors.

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Box

System

2023 Calls for Service – Response Zone in Whitemarsh (Box #)

BHVFC's responses to specific boxes within Whitemarsh Township.

Note: Box 32-24a is identified on this chart due to the frequency of responses. Box 32-24A is a target hazard location due to the facility's occupancy.



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Mike Monahan

Firefighter Monahan joined the Barren Hill Fire Company family in 2022. Firefighter Monahan lives in the City of Philadelphia and works as a grocery order writer for Whole Foods Market in Plymouth Meeting. Firefighter Monahan said, **"From day** one, they took me in and treated me like family. I like their professionalism, integrity, compassion, loyalty, and honesty to the Community and fellow members. It is more than the fire service to me; it is a second home filled with outstanding men and women. A great company filled with amazing people. I highly recommend joining."



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Mutual Aid

To ensure the proper number of firefighters respond to a call for service, the fire service relies on mutual aid assistance from nearby fire companies. BHVFC's response district regularly relies on mutual aid fire companies from

Conshohocken Borough, Plymouth Township, Whitpain Township, Ambler Borough, Upper Dublin Township, and Springfield Township.

Mutual aid assistance may be requested by any agency, and BHVFC may be dispatched to assist anywhere. In addition to the companies listed above, BHVFC regularly provides mutual aid assistance to other municipalities such as East Norriton and Norristown.











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2023 Calls for Service - By District

The Barren Hill Volunteer Fire Company provides mutual aid responses in many surrounding municipalities.

21% of responses (114 Calls for Service) in 2023 were in support of our Mutual Aid partners.

79% of responses in 2023 were in BHVFC's primary response district in Whitemarsh Township.

(A closer evaluation of response areas where BHVFC is the primary responder, including the panhandle of Springfield Township, increases BHVFC's response area to nearly 88% of responses.)



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- Springfield Flourtown, Oreland & Wyndmoor Fire Companies
- Other Norriton, Union of Cynwyd, Upper Merion, & Glenside Fire Companies
 - Colonial Harmonville, Plymouth, & Conshohocken Fire Companies

2019 – 2023 Comparison of Mutual Aid Responses



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Derek Hines

Firefighter Hines joined the Barren Hill Fire Company family in 2021. Firefighter Hines is a federal prosecutor and prosecutes high-profile cases for the United States Department of Justice. Firefighter Hines has prosecuted cases nationwide involving public corruption, white-collar crimes, and organized crime. Some of his cases have been documented on HBO and Amazon. Firefighter Hines is also an adjunct professor at the Villanova University School of Law and is a former collegiate basketball player at Franklin and Marshal College.



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BHVFC 2023 Annual Report ~ Weekly Training Exercises



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Training exercises are delivered annually via a mix of annual qualifications and standards, hands-on operations, and classroom lectures. Weekly training exercises help keep our Volunteers operationally ready and allow our members to train with each other, recognizing the strengths within our membership and building on our weaknesses.

2023 Forty-Nine (49) Weekly Training Exercises

Estimated Total # Training Hours: 2,790 Volunteer Hours



BHVFC 2023 Annual Report ~ Weekly Training Exercises 10 Year Chart



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2023 Training ~ Training Topics

2023 training exercises were categorized into the five topics to the right. While the main training topics are displayed in the chart, the majority of training exercises include more than one discipline. (Ex. Engine & Ladder Co Training)



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CONGRATULATIONS!

Firefighter Grant Atherholt, Firefighter Betsy Gekonge, Firefighter Mokeira Gekonge, Firefighter Mike Monahan, Firefighter Timmy Murphy Jr., Firefighter Josh Tirado



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2023 Firefighter I Certification Achieved

The Firefighter I certification is the basic structural firefighting program that certifies new members. This course is an intense 180+ hour program, broken up over four modules. 7 members attained their Firefighter I certification in 2023.

Of Note: Mom & Daughter, Betsy and Mo Gekonge attained their certification together, in the same class.

Also, Mo Gekonge and Jayson Yoder completed their certification at 17 years of age as part of the inaugural class at the Montgomery County Fire Academy that allowed 17-yearold participation.



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Trevor Heins

Firefighter Heins joined the Barren Hill Fire Company family in 2020. Firefighter Heins is married and lives in the northwest section of the City of Philadelphia. Firefighter Heins works remotely as a software developer. Firefighter Heins joined the Barren Hill Fire Company to be more active in light of his remote/work-from-home day job, and also to be more fulfilled. Firefighter Heins has a glow about him that has earned him the nickname "Hollywood" around the Engine Room!

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Special Services ~ 10 Year Comparison

Special Services are events outside of training and calls for service where volunteers support fire prevention activities, station maintenance activities, and other community-type events.

This chart shows the annual Fire Company Special Service events for the last 10 years.



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Shaun Maher

Captain Maher has served at the Barren Hill Fire Company since 2000. He has served as a Lieutenant and Captain, and previously sat on the Board of Trustees. Captain Maher is the chairman of our Membership Committee, reviewing new applications, conducting interviews, and following up at the time of retention. Captain Maher is a Pennsylvania State Trooper, assigned as a Fire Marshal since 2017 in Troop K. Captain Maher is married and has three dogs and two cats. He enjoys spending time golfing, hiking, and fishing!



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2023 Special Service ~ By Event

In 2023, our members participated in 88 Special Services representing 1,432.5 hours of service. Our special Services are broken down into seven (7) categories:

Smoke Detector Installation – 18% Community Engagement – 28% Station Maint. / Training – 11% Fireworks Details – 8% Fire Prevention Activities – 21% Funeral Details – 9% Recruitment – 5%



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The Barren Hill Volunteer Fire Company honorably participates in the Operation 6abc Save-A-Life Smoke Detector Installation program. In conjunction with the Township Fire Marshal's Office, our career staff installed nearly fifty (50) smoke detectors in Whitemarsh Township residences in 2023.

To have your smoke detectors evaluated, please call our career staff at 610-825-2250 or the Township Fire Marshal's Office.

Proudly serving Whitemarsh Township and the Surrounding Communities since 1915 Operation 6ABC Save-A-Life Smoke Detector Installation Program





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Mike Gaffney

Firefighter Mike Gaffney has been a volunteer firefighter for forty-five (45) years. Firefighter Gaffney's volunteer career began in Delaware County at the Glenolden Fire Company (Life Member). He joined the Barren Hill Fire Company in 1999. Firefighter Gaffney currently serves on the Board of Trustees, Apparatus Committee, and is the chairman of the Fundraising Committee. He previously held the position of Chief Engineer. Firefighter Gaffney is retired from his career as a fire marshal at Widener University. He has resided in Whitemarsh Township for more than twenty-five (25) years with his wife and children.

Calls for Service	4,797 hours	
Weekly Training Exercises	2,691 hours	
Special Services	1,432.5 hours	
Fire Police Callouts	390 hours	10
Fire Officer Investigations	32 hours	
Board of Trustees Meetings	330 hours	
Monthly Company Meetings	862 hours	
TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS	10,534.5 hours (439 Days)	

The total number of volunteer hours reflects estimates of the time that our Volunteers have given to support the administration and operations of the Barren Hill Volunteer Fire Company. These conservative estimations do not include the hundreds of hours of training outside of our weekly training exercises, time spent maintaining the actual firehouse, apparatus, and equipment, as well as Municipal and County Fire Service meetings.

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2023 Volunteer Service to Whitemarsh Township and the Surrounding Communities





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Sherri Klein

Fire Police Officer Sherri Klein has been a member of the Barren Hill Fire Company since 1994. A stay-at-home mom raising her children, Fire Police Officer Klein looked for a way to give back to her community when her children were in school. Fire Police Officer Klein is married and raised her three children in Whitemarsh Township. She said, "I don't save lives. I direct traffic around them. From the day I joined, I have always felt welcome and like I belonged. I feel like what I am doing is worthwhile and meaningful."

Make it a family tradition

The Fire Company is often referred to as a family. In fact, many in our company are family members. Regardless of the family connection, we have room for your family to join our family! Check out www.barrenhill/volunteer



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Grandfather & Grandson **Mother & Daughter** Aunt & Uncle



Interested in joining the fire company? Make it a family affair!



Our Family has room for your Family!

Father & Son **Brother & Sister** Cousins





Richard "Dick" Tschopp January 26, 1938 – September 8, 2023 31 Year Member



George Neborak June 20, 1928 – May 14, 2023 33 Year Member

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In Memoriam

In 2023, three (3) members of the Barren Hill Volunteer Fire Company passed away.

We are forever grateful for their dedicated service to the Community and to our Fire Company. Their service and sacrifice will not be forgotten!

May they rest in eternal peace!







Pat joined the Fire Company on July 9, 1993, and remained active with the Fire Company since. On the operations side of the Fire Company, Pat was a driver and Safety Officer and currently held the position of Health & Safety Officer. On the Administrative side of the Fire Company, Pat was a Trustee on the Board of Trustees. Pat sat on the Board of Trustees for 27 years, including a stint as the Chairman.

Pat was respected by all. The men and women of the Fire Company listened when he spoke. Pat was the calm demeanor many of us needed when the going got tough. Pat was the voice of reason when reason was lost. Pat was always rational in thought and cared for his community and the men and women at BHVFC. Pat would do anything for anyone and at any time. One of the highlights of Pat's career at BHVFC is the last 25+ years spreading Christmas Joy to our Lafayette Hill Community as Santa on our annual Santa Runs at Christmas time. After Fire Company meetings or trainings, Pat could be coaxed into telling a joke or two or three, that kept the members in hysterics! Pat was one of the best!

Pat was called home to be with the Lord on June 21, 2023. We are forever grateful to Pat for his leadership in our Fire Company and the Community, but most of all, we are forever grateful for his friendship.

Pat, You are at peace and no longer in pain. You have won the race! Rest Easy, Friend; we got it from here.

Patrick DiCicco BHVFC Health & Safety Officer BHVFC Trustee October 16, 1947 – June 21, 2023

Proudly serving Whitemarsh Township and the Surrounding Communities since 1915

In Memoriam

Life Active Member, Trustee, & Current Health and Safety Officer

Patrick DiCicco October 16, 1947 – June 21, 2023

> Member since July 9, 1993



Reaching New Heights Fundraising Campaign

In 2022, the apparatus committee began working on specifications for a new Tower Ladder. Our 1997 Sutphen Tower Ladder was reaching the end of its serviceable life and has begun requiring costly repairs.

In June 2023, BHVFC placed an order for a new Sutphen Tower Ladder. With a 33-36 month build time, the estimated cost is nearly \$2,000,000.

Our Reaching New Heights Fundraising Campaign is our push for the community's financial support, above and beyond the annual donations, to help fund this crucial piece of firefighting equipment. This aerial ladder will serve this community for the next twenty-five (25) years!





New Heights Website





Reaching New Heights Fundraising Campaign Goal



Reaching New Heights Fundraising Campaign Goal To Date

\$55,823 - 3%

Total # of Solicitations Returned for the Reaching New Heights Campaign Fundraiser

607 / 6000 - 10%

Act 91 of 2020

Tired of paying property taxes?

At the end of 2023, the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors approved an ordinance for up to 100% property tax credit for active volunteers. While the specifics of the program are still being worked out, the tax credit will be available for 2024 taxes!

In early February 2024, the Montgomery County Commissioners passed a tax credit of up to 100% on County property taxes for active volunteers.

Check out www.barrenhill.com/volunteer to learn how to become a member, so you may also qualify for a tax credit!

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Jake Frye

Firefighter Frye joined the Barren Hill Fire Company family in 2020. He is a 2nd generation firefighter and also a 12-year volunteer at the Flourtown Fire Company. He serves as a Lieutenant and the President at Flourtown Fire Company. Firefighter Frye was recently promoted to Assistant Director of Emergency Management for Montgomery County, overseeing the County's Special Operations Division. Firefighter Frye has made lifelong friendships in the fire service. Firefighter Frye is a Philly sports fan, no matter how many times the teams break his heart!

Those who can, do. Those who can do more, VOLUNTEER! We have a NEED for YOU! Our members are from all walks of life, from many different professions, from all age brackets, and all neighborhoods.

> What can you do? Stop by and see us. Check out www.barrenhill.com/volunteer



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A message from the Fire Chief



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A message from the Fire Chief

2024 marks the seventeenth (17th) year that I have proudly accepted the title of Fire Chief of the Barren Hill Volunteer Fire Company. The Barren Hill Volunteer Fire Company is not the story of one, though. Rather, our Fire Company is the story of the many who have dedicated their lives to volunteering in their community since 1915. In the most inopportune times, our volunteers have committed to leaving what they are doing and responding to our neighbor's emergency, never asking for anything in return.

There are not enough good things to say about our fire company's dedicated men and women. From every neighborhood, our volunteers are committed to serving their neighbors, their friends, and their community!

The volunteer fire service is coming to a crossroads. Community changes, societal changes, and less time means that fewer and fewer people are willing to volunteer. The cost of a volunteer fire company is minimal to the municipal budget compared to a fully paid department. Not everyone in our company is a firefighter battling fires, performing rescues, or responding to other emergencies. There are fire police officers controlling pedestrian and vehicular traffic, as well as fundraising and fire prevention opportunities. There is something for everyone. Make 2024 the year that you join our family. Check out www.barrenhill.com/volunteer for more information!

As we look to 2024, we are excited about what is on the horizon. We look forward to a fire-safe Whitemarsh Township. We look forward to continuing to build our partnerships with all of our community stakeholders. We look forward to continuing to serve our friends and our neighbors.

~ Chris Schwartz, Fire Chief ~

The Officers and Members of the Barren Hill Volunteer Fire Company look forward to serving our neighbors and our Community of Whitemarsh Township.

We appreciate the continued support and look forward to a Happy, Healthy, and Fire Safe 2024!



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