

The Thornton Family:

Giving Back to the Community

They Love

By Caitlin Perrone, Staff Writer



Joe with his daughter

The Millburn-Short Hills First Aid Squad is a family affair for Hartshorn resident Joe Thornton. As a proponent of giving back to the community, Joe became interested in joining after hearing about it from his daughter Caroline. Caroline joined the cadets back when she was in high school and now Joe's other daughter Rachel is currently a cadet.

"For nearly 60 years, the Millburn-Short Hills First Aid Squad has been serving the community and operating solely on volunteers and donations," says Joe.

After years of volunteering and donating to charities such as the Salvation Army, the now "actively retired" Joe decided to go through the training and serve on the squad.

In the training program lasting 10-12 weeks, Joe went through a highly intensive course in first responding, covering a range of topics from the basics of anatomy to various illnesses or injuries that one might encounter in a shift and the procedure for dealing with them. After his graduation from the program, Joe became a fully certified EMT and has been serving on the squad for nearly two years -- as a Crew Chief and also as a member of the squad's Board of Trustees.

Of his time on the squad, Joe remarks that he "has never seen a call repeat," noting the uniqueness of each situation. From injuries sustained in a car accident or injuries from a fall, each call is as different as those they come to protect and help. In this way,

Joe's experience on the squad has become vastly rewarding. In the darkest moments of his neighbors' lives, Joe and his fellow squad members are there to help see them through it, their service sometimes being the difference between life and death. It is the hands-on, quick-thinking type of community service that Joe says is exceptionally satisfying.

Joe says, "For those looking to give back to their community, the Millburn-Short Hills First Aid Squad has a lot offer." The squad is organized entirely by volunteers and donations, as a first-responder team is not funded by tax dollars and is therefore entirely community-based. While donations are always welcome, joining the squad as an EMT or a Cadet comes with invaluable skills and life-changing experiences. While the Cadet program is open to high school students aged at least 16, fully trained EMTs must be at least 21 years old. There is no medical background or experience required to join, simply dedication, commitment, and a desire to help the community. **For those looking to learn more about the Millburn-Short Hills First Aid, please visit <http://www.mshvfas.org> or call (973) 379-7969.**



Do you have a volunteer experience you would like to share, or are you passionate about a specific organization? Email us at leah.koster@n2pub.com, so we can feature your story.