



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FIREFIGHTERS CONDUCT SUCCESSFUL BOOT DRIVE IN HONOR OF JEFF CHAVIS

Firefighters from Lexington and Richland counties as well as Lexington County Emergency Medical Services personnel held a very successful Boot Drive on Friday, June 20 and Saturday, June 21. This seventh annual Boot Drive raised \$40,443.61 to help finance the operation of the Jeffrey Vaden Chavis House at the Shirley Badke Retreat and the renovation and expansion of the facility, which provides support for burn patients and housing for relatives of patients who are treated at the hospital burn unit.

Firefighters and EMS personnel collected the money in firefighter boots at ten Midlands Wal-Mart stores and at seven intersections on major highways across Lexington County. Firefighters and EMS personnel described this effort as “ordinary people truly making a difference.” They reported people donating whatever they could afford; from their pocket change up to \$100 bills.

The money raised during this Boot Drive will benefit the Jeffrey Vaden Chavis House, which was established by the Southeastern Firefighters’ Burn Foundation, adjacent to the campus of Doctor’s Hospital in Augusta, Ga. The home provides housing for relatives of patients who are treated at the Joseph M. Still Burn Unit at Doctor’s Hospital.

The home is named for Chavis, a 22 year-old Lexington County firefighter who died on July 12, 2001 as a result of complications from third-degree burns that he suffered when debris fell on him while he was fighting two residential fires on June 16, 2001.

The Joseph M. Still Burn Unit treats patients from South Carolina and other Southeastern states, with hospital stays that can last up to several months. About 50 percent of the unit’s patients are from South Carolina. In 2007, more than 1,200 families stayed at the Jeffrey Vaden Chavis House at least once.

Mr. Gerald Woods, President/CEO of the Southeastern Firefighters’ Burn Foundation said “this yearly Boot Drive has become one of the largest financial donations from a fundraiser in the history of the Foundation.” In seven years these firefighters have raised over \$348,943.61 through the annual Boot Drives. These funds have allowed us to complete the renovation and expansion of the Jeff Chavis House from twenty-seven (27) to fifty (50) beds. We were operating at or above 100 percent capacity each and every night and this expansion was desperately needed.

Citizens who want additional information on the Boot Drive or how they can support the Jeff Chavis House can call the Southeastern Firefighters’ Burn Foundation at 1 (800) 650-2876.

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