

## Igniting Change: Tony Stefani's Story and the Mission of the San Francisco Firefighters Cancer Prevention Foundation

In 2001, Tony Stefani was just shy of turning 50 when he heard the words no one wants to hear, "You have cancer." A 28-year veteran of the San Francisco Fire Department, Tony was the Captain of Rescue 1, located in Station 1, and like many others in his field, did not consider his occupation as being high risk for cancer.

Tony was diagnosed with a rare form of kidney cancer that strikes just 1 in 100,000. At the time, firefighters with cancer had to prove the harmful exposure they experienced on the job correlated with their diagnosis. In the months following his diagnosis, he used all his sick and vacation days for medical appointments, and his doctor advised him to retire. An abundance of kindness and compassion from his fellow SFFD colleagues shined through – 200 officers each donated a day of their own sick time to Tony so that he could retire with full pension at age 50.

"Launching the San Francisco Firefighters Cancer Prevention Foundation was my way to thank the friends and colleagues who came through for me when I needed it most, and my way to pay it forward to those who may someday need help," Tony says of the organization he founded in 2007. Through the generosity of Local 798, he received a \$100,000 grant to start the

organization and continues to serve as its president. Its mission is dedicated to the early detection and prevention of cancer in both active and retired San Francisco firefighters.

"We wanted to establish a direct link to elevated rates of cancer and toxic exposures in our profession," said Tony, which was a novel idea at the time. There was little awareness about the dangerous long-term health effects of smoke inhalation and the importance of using protective equipment to prevent inhaling toxic gases as well as the need for immediate gross decontamination before leaving the scene of a fire.

Since 2007, the San Francisco Firefighters Cancer Prevention Foundation has helped more than 400 people, with current active cases over 150. It has expanded its reach to help firefighters fighting cancer throughout Northern California and has been a model for other communities to follow. Its health navigation services range from providing financial assistance so that firefighters can get second opinions, to supplementing insurance benefits, evaluating patient treatment options and even offering transportation between medical appointments. The organization is comprised of 15 board members



Tony Stefani and Kathy Duvall

including firefighters and doctors from Stanford and UCSF, and it actively commissions science-based studies including new research about the importance of nutrition.

The San Francisco Firefighters Cancer Prevention Foundation relies on donations to fund its annual operating budget, and recently hosted its biennial Igniting Hope gala at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco, where more than 500 people attended. Former SF Giants slugger Hunter Pence gave keynote remarks and SF Fire Credit Union was a proud sponsor of the event.

Tony is optimistic for the future. "My hope is for positive change, and through the San Francisco Firefighters Cancer Prevention Foundation we are helping a lot of people."

For more information and to donate, please visit: [www.sffcpf.org](http://www.sffcpf.org)

### In this Issue:

Tony Stefani and the San Francisco Firefighters Cancer Prevention Foundation  
Message from President & CEO Kathy Duvall  
SFGATE's Best of Bay Area Credit Union Recognition  
Out & About  
Member Shred Day Event  
Fraud Awareness



## MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT & CEO

KATHY DUVALL

As many of us know, San Francisco summers are often colder than our winters. So here we are with summer upon us, yet the Bay Area's microclimates show a wide range of temperatures – whether you are wearing shorts and t-shirts in San Rafael and San Carlos or bundling up in fleece jackets South of Market and in the Sunset District, I hope many of you are enjoying the longer days, summer barbecues and perhaps some long-awaited vacation time with family and friends.

I had the pleasure and privilege of recently attending and serving as honorary committee member for the San Francisco Firefighters Cancer Prevention Foundation's Igniting Hope gala where money was raised to help those in our firefighter community who are fighting cancer. Retired SF Giant Hunter Pence gave keynote remarks about finding life's purpose, and SF Fire Credit Union was a corporate sponsor of the event. You can learn more about this inspiring organization and its leader, Tony Stefani, in the cover story of this issue of the Siren.

As we always have, SF Fire continues to support the San Francisco Firefighter Recruit Training Academy classes. This year, we will support six Academy classes by funding their class accounts, conducting financial education lunches and sponsoring graduation ceremonies. We're also thrilled to announce we've implemented a program where we are onsite at the Academy, making it convenient for new recruits to join the credit union. Last year, we supported 160 recruits who graduated from the training program, and we gave back over \$120,000 to fire departments in San Francisco, San Mateo and Marin counties.

I'm excited to report that SF Fire was recently recognized by SFGATE as the Bay Area's Top Credit Union! This is SFGATE's inaugural Best of Bay Area awards – there were more than 100,000 nominations, and 140,000 votes cast across 119 different categories. Thanks to all of you who nominated and voted for us. We hope to

spread the word about all the ways we are here to help our local community achieve their financial goals.

We recently held our semi-annual Shred Day where we provide members with a secure and convenient way to dispose of sensitive documents. The event was a huge success, with over 259 cars participating and a total of 16,000 pounds of shredded documents that will be recycled, saving:

- **136 trees** from being cut down
- **56,000 gallons of water** from being wasted
- **8,000 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions** from being released

Thanks for your continued feedback and support, and please be sure to tell your friends and family about us!

Kathy Duvall



President & CEO

2024 SFGATE's Best of Bay Area

## SF Fire Credit Union Named "Best of Bay Area" by SFGATE

A big thank you to our members and SFGATE readers for this recognition. The SFGATE Best of Bay Area recognized businesses across 119 categories and we're honored to have been voted Best Credit Union.

Learn more at [SFGATE.com/best](https://www.sfgate.com/best)





COMMUNITY EVENTS

# Out & About

Shred Day | May 6



Opening new SFFD recruit memberships at the SFFD Training Academy | May 29



SFFD Academy 133rd Firefighter Recruit Graduation | May 31



Opening new memberships at Old Skool Café – a life skills job training program | June 11



KQED Check Please! Taste & Sip Event | June 10



SFGATE's Inaugural Best of Bay Area Award Ceremony | June 21



SFGATE's Inaugural Best of Bay Area Award Ceremony | June 21 cont.



## Document Shred Day

We're happy to announce our next sensitive document destruction day at our **Stonestown Branch** (parking lot).

**Saturday, September 28th**  
9am to 3pm | Stonestown Parking Lot  
565 Buckingham Way, San Francisco

**Service:** Onsite industrial shredding

**Restrictions:** The shred trucks can only handle paper documents. No e-waste. They cannot accept VHS/DVDs, tapes, binders, or cardboard boxes. You do NOT need to remove paper clips or staples, but please remove any binder clips.

### FRAUD AWARENESS

## What you should know about Vishing Scams

Vishing, short for 'voice phishing,' attacks can start with a text message or a call out of the blue. They are designed to make you panic or respond without thinking. Remember that SF Fire Credit Union will never contact you directly to ask you to confirm your personal and account information.

### How to protect yourself:



Contact your financial institution directly if you're suspicious about a phone number



Be wary of unexpected text messages that include some variety of 'activation code'



We will never contact you directly to ask you to confirm your PIN and/or a full card number



Do not give out your full Social Security Number or date of birth



For more fraud tips, visit our website at [sffirecu.org/vishing](https://sffirecu.org/vishing) ([sffirecu.org/support/identity](https://sffirecu.org/support/identity))

### California Street Branch

3201 California Street, SF, CA 94118

### Stonestown Branch

565 Buckingham Way, SF, CA 94132

### Noe Valley Branch

3908 24th Street, SF, CA 94114

### Branch Hours

Monday – Friday 9:30am-5:30pm  
Saturday 10:00am-2:00pm

### Contact Center & Web Chat Hours

Monday – Friday 7:00am-7:00pm  
Saturday 9:00am-5:00pm

Hours and closures are subject to change, so members are encouraged to check our website frequently for the most current information.

### Credit Union Branch Holidays

Thursday, July 4 – Independence Day

Monday, September 2 – Labor Day

The Contact Center will be closed on Independence Day and Labor Day.



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We do business in accordance with the Federal Fair Housing Law and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act.



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Your savings insured to \$250,000 per account.  
By members' choice, this institution is not federally insured, or insured by any state government.



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