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News

Welcome to the Village of Mineola!

Mineola Junior Firefighters to Host German Counterparts

For the past few years, the Mineola Junior Fire Department has been involved in an international e-mail exchange with the FF-Stelling-Hamburg Junior Fire Department, located in Hamburg, Germany.

The exchange began with a few discussions on training and firefighting. Over time, the suggestion was made to develop an exchange program between the two departments.

In 2006, two firefighters from Hamburg visited Mineola. They were welcomed into the home of Mineola firefighter Bill Gresalfi who is one of the head advisors for the Mineola Junior FD.

During their visit, they trained with the Mineola Fire Department, responded to alarms in Mineola and also enjoyed touring New York. Before leaving Mineola, they planned for a return visit with their junior firefighters in the summer of 2007.

Gresalfi and Gary Mazur, another head advisor for the Mineola juniors, have been formulating a plan to provide a unique exchange program for their German counterparts filled with firefighting, camaraderie and fun. They have reached out to many community organizations and the overwhelming support will undoubtedly create an unforgettable cultural exchange for these firefighters.

On July 15, 2007 the FF-Stellingen-Hamburg Junior Fire Department will arrive in Mineola. Of the 14 German juniors scheduled to travel to Mineola, only two have been to the United States before. They will be accompanied by two chiefs and three firefighters from their department.

The itinerary for their stay will begin with a visit to the Plattedeutsche Park Restaurant in Franklin Square for an authentic German meal. The Mineola Juniors will accompany the German juniors on several excursions during their visit. Highlights include a trip to the Nassau County Firefighters Museum, The FDNY Museum, and visits with Mineola Mayor Jack Martins and the Honorable Judge Ute Wolf Lally, the highest elected official of German descent in New York.

Training will also be part of this experience. The German juniors will work with all of Mineola's fire companies. Each company will present instruction on a unique facet of U.S. firefighting techniques. While the Germans are eager to train with all of the companies, they are particularly interested in our ladder trucks as their department does not have a ladder truck.

Of course, there will also be some fun in this exchange. The German juniors will travel to Lake George along with Mineola's Juniors for a few days of swimming, boating and a host of other amusements. During the course of their stay, they will also attend a baseball game at Coney Island and tour New York City.

This week of events is only the first half of this partnership. Mineola's German guests have also extended an invitation for the Mineola Juniors to visit Hamburg, Germany. Recently, firefighters Ryan Traina, Daniel Siraco and Warden Gresalfi traveled to Germany to begin laying the groundwork for a visit to Germany in 2008. This historic exchange may be the first time a junior fire department has had a complete cultural exchange across two continents.

Members of the Mineola Fire Department and Mineola Junior Fire Department know that the residents of Mineola will welcome their friends from the FF-Stellingen-Hamburg Junior Fire Department.



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