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**LIEUTENANT LUIS ESPINOSA
PRESIDENT & CEO**

When firefighter Luis Espinosa attended the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) bi-annual convention in 1990, he was excited about networking with other firefighters and learning new techniques for rescuing members of the community who find themselves in danger. He had no idea he was about to be inspired to take lead on a new form of community service in South Florida.

The spark which ignited the idea for one of the most successful charity firefighter calendars to date happened during an IAFF convention trade show. Members of the Houston and Vancouver Fire Departments were exhibiting their firefighters calendars, raising money for various charities. As a former model/actor in South Florida, known as a Mecca for fitness and modeling, Espinosa thought he could easily find firemen whose looks would be in demand for such an endeavor. He worked hard for two years, learning how to create a charity, find and work with pro-bono professional photographers, graphic artists, printers and volunteers as well as sponsors. By 1992 he had created a hot commodity that was destined to light fires in the South Florida public and raise awareness of important community issues.

To date the non-profit organization has raised over \$142,000 to benefit charities such as the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, Habitat for Humanity's Hurricane Andrew Fund, Ronald McDonald Children's Charities, Neighbors 4 Neighbors, Best Buddies, Cystic Fibrosis and Here's Help.

Born in 1962 in Cuba, Espinosa emigrated to the United States with his parents in 1966, growing up in New Jersey and later Miami, which was becoming known as the Capital of Latin America and refuge for Cubans. After graduating from Hialeah-Miami Lakes High School, he enrolled in the firefighter academy and paramedic school while pursuing a bachelor's degree in Psychology at Florida International University. He was a paramedic with the Hialeah Fire Department by 1984 and graduated college in 1986.

“My dad and his friends were cops, so I came from a civil service family and world,” Espinosa said. “I played around with modeling and acting to make extra cash, but I was really fascinated by the medical and human behavioral fields. I felt becoming a paramedic was the right fit for me. I used my psychology background to better understand how to treat the people I come across in emergencies. It also came in handy when running a charitable organization. It's very fulfilling to know that the vast majority of my work really makes a difference in people's lives.”

Espinosa's unique training and community service gained the respect of his peers and superiors. In 1996 he was promoted to Lieutenant and in 1999 he was asked to serve two-years as Hialeah Firefighters Union President. During these years he has made numerous appearances on many television and radio programs, successfully promoting fire safety and the South Florida Firefighters Calendar. He's currently planning to use these appearances as a springboard to pursue a career in broadcasting after he retires from the Hialeah Fire Department in a few years.

Espinosa lives with his wife of 15 years, Bertha, and his three children, ages 10, 9 and 3, in Miami Lakes.

For more information visit the web site at www.FirefightersCalendar.com.

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