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The Fall Fashion Issue

WHY NYC IS ABUZZ OVER

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LIST OF THE 100
BEST DRESSED
NEW YORKERS

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Diane weigh in

EXCLUSIVE!

Shoe king Giuseppe Zanotti
Ugly Betty's Eric Mabius
Style arbiter Eleanor Yvisaker
Handbag-designing Zac Posen
Fashion Week favorite Michael Kors
Charity-minded Mark Messier



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You Can Call on Me

Answer the call of the New York Police and Fire Widows' and Children's Benefit Fund, and help the families of those killed in the line of duty.

by Mark Messier

SINCE 2001 the month of September has taken on a powerful meaning. On one day in history, lives were taken, saved, and changed; people of every age, race, and creed stood together and helped one another. Too many died, but thankfully many more lived because of the courageous and selfless acts of New York City firefighters, police officers, and Port Authority and EMS personnel.

After September 11 the number of families assisted by the Benefit Fund more than doubled when 60 police and Port Authority officers and 343 firefighters and EMS workers perished at the World Trade Center.

I remember feeling that I, too, had a responsibility. As a member of the National Hockey League and of the New York community—and simply as a member of my own family and of the human race—I somehow needed to help. In the weeks and months that followed, I met many families who were awaiting news about missing loved ones. It made me vow never to forget the sacrifice made by those who lost their lives and those who gave their lives to save others.

Seven years have passed, and unfortunately, the risks and danger associated with the job of keeping New Yorkers safe, secure, and protected have increased. New York fire, police, Port Authority and EMS personnel continue to put themselves in

harm's way every day, and their families continue to hope for a "quiet tour." But these are dangerous jobs, and as many as 15 men and women are killed in the line of duty each year, leaving their families in rough emotional and financial shape.

Founded in 1985 by Rusty Staub (and later led by charity president and CEO Stephen Dannhauser), the New York Police and Fire Widows' and Children's Benefit Fund (NYPFWC) has sought to augment the city's pension payments and help ease the financial burdens faced by families of police officers and firefighters who are lost in the line of duty. Prior to September 11, 2001, the NYPFWC distributed a one-time death benefit plus annual stipends to fire and police families, including widows who'd lost a loved one as far back as 1945. After September 11, 2001, the number of families assisted by the Benefit Fund more than doubled when 60 police and Port Authority officers and 343 firefighters and EMS workers perished at the World Trade Center.

To date, there are nearly 700 fire, police, Port Authority, and EMS families who are assisted by the Benefit Fund. On September 23, I'll be living up to my promise to always remember the ongoing sacrifice made by these brave men and women. Every day New Yorkers prove that ordinary people can do extraordinary things.

What will you do?

The 23rd annual New York Police and Fire Widows' and Children's Benefit Fund dinner takes place on Tuesday, September 23, at 6 P.M. at the New York Hilton, 1335 Avenue of the Americas. For tickets, more information, or to make a donation (97 percent of which goes directly to Benefit Fund beneficiaries), call Linda Giammona at 212-735-4505 or visit answerthecall.org.

