



## **Sandy Springs Fire Rescue**

### **“Fire Safety Birthday Parties at the Fire Station”**

On December 29, 2006, one year after Sandy Springs was incorporated, the Sandy Springs Fire Rescue (SSFR) Department was founded and became the City’s primary provider of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Sandy Springs is Georgia’s sixth largest city. It is a mixed residential and commercial suburb immediately north of Atlanta and has a permanent resident population of 98,000 with an estimated daytime population of 500,000.

The City of Sandy Springs Fire Rescue Department operates four fire stations and receives approximately 10 calls a day for public events. These events range from birthday party requests, CPR/AED classes, career day participation, child safety seat installation, and station tours. Fire Chief Jack McElfish’s vision for the department is twofold: be active in the community and use the time interacting as a time for learning. While conducting an event, one goal is to discuss public education and safety awareness. One of the community friendly events the department is most proud of is the birthday parties for children program. In these tough financial times, the Sandy Springs Fire Rescue Department offers a fun and frugal way to celebrate this great day.

Called “Fire Safety Birthday Parties at the Fire Station,” these events are scheduled in advance and allow the party to come to the Fire Station. These parties include a tour of the station, which walks you through the different areas explaining the specific function and the jobs that are performed there. The tour also allows the children and adults to see the fire trucks firsthand and



learn about the different tools and equipment that are on them. Some of the stations have different types of trucks; the firefighters will discuss the different functions of each truck on a children's level as well as on an adult's level. During this part of tour, both children and adults may sit in the truck and have their picture taken as if they were responding to an emergency. This part of the tour is usually the most fun for everyone involved.

After the tour of the station and the trucks, the party continues with meeting the local firefighters. This is a time that children and adults learn about the protective clothing and equipment that firefighters wear when they enter into a burning building. It is also a time when all involved can learn fire safety tips such as stop-drop-and-roll, the meeting place, and how to call 911. At this stage of the party, adults are encouraged to ask questions with regard to fire safety or any other concerns they may have. At the end of this session each family is given a bag that contains a coloring book and fire helmet for the children, as well as different safety brochures for adults—topics include smoke alarms, home fire drills, fire extinguishers, CERT programs, and information about CPR/AED programs. The bag also contains a First Alert double-sensor smoke and fire alarm for use outside the child's bedroom. This encourages fire safety education in the family home. Lastly, the party is concluded with presents and cake (provided by the parents), which is set up in the kitchen or dayroom of the station. Here, the children and parents can visit with their guests and firefighters and talk about their wonderful visit at the fire station. The City of Sandy Springs Fire Rescue Department provides excellent customer service with response, education, prevention, and professional service. The services offered at community events such as birthday parties are invaluable to the public. Members of the Department look forward to



these opportunities every day. Although they feel duty bound to educate people about fire safety and safety awareness, if they can do it in a fun and friendly environment their lessons may not only last a lifetime, they may also save a life.