

**SERVING WITH PURPOSE** ♦ **PREPARING FOR EXCELLENCE**



I am pleased to present this “snapshot” of a very accomplished year for Plano Fire-Rescue Explorer Post 215.

Inside you will find an attempt to capture Post 215’s journey in 2019 as its members worked to accomplish the Post’s mission of *delivering Plano area youth in-depth exposure to the firefighting and EMS professions while providing comprehensive experiences that promote character development, leadership, and organizational skills.*

In 2019 Post 215 took both broad and bold steps to realize its vision of *becoming the region’s preeminent Explorer Post by providing its youth member’s immersive and empowering experiences within a well-rounded program of activities.* Post 215’s long-term goal is to provide public safety agencies with potential recruits that have proven abilities to make positive impacts within themselves, their teams, and their communities.

In late 2018 Explorers and Advisors participated in a six week long process that re-established the mission and vision of the Post. Through that process it was determined that a shared mission and vision included a wide-range of activities and worked to ensure that an Explorers’ experience was much more aligned with the fire service experience. Department and Learning For Life requirements were reviewed, and an in-depth guidance document was created as the first version of the *Explorer Handbook*. Multiple legal forms were created and/or revised and then reviewed by the City Attorney’s office to ensure their accuracy. Explorer personnel files were reviewed and ensured to be up-to-date.

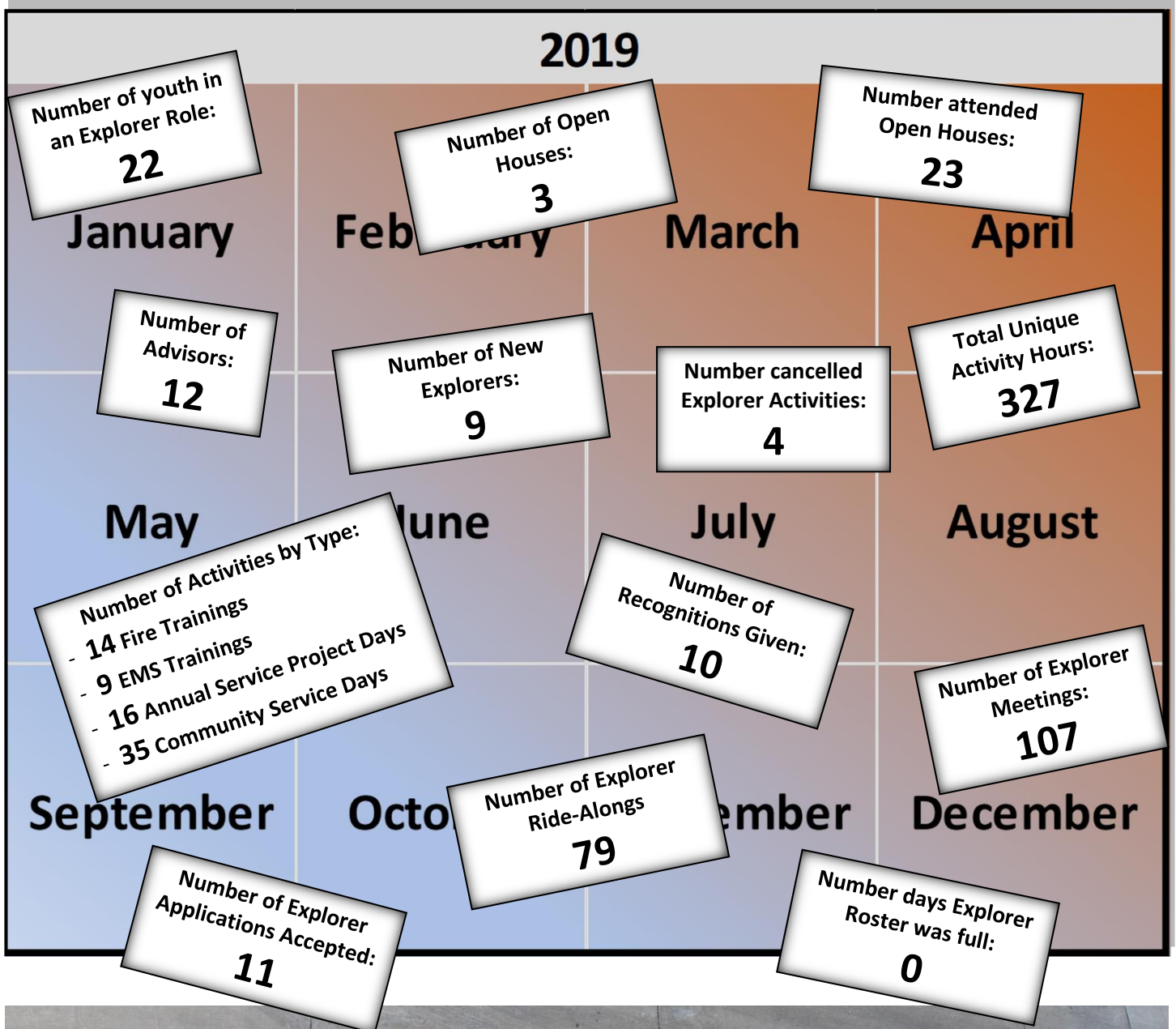
The new Handbook took effect in January 2019 and provided much-needed guidance to Explorers (particularly the Explorer Officer Cadre) as they became more involved in the running of the Post. As evidenced on the pages of this report, many new programs and activities took place this year that made 2019 perhaps one of the best years the Post has ever seen.

I am very proud of what has been accomplished by the membership as well as incredibly excited of what is yet to come!

John Barrett, Lieutenant | Post Committee Chair



# Year At A Glance



# 2019 Accomplishments: *Excellence in Action*

- **Continued Involvement in Community Outreach / Life Safety Education Activities**

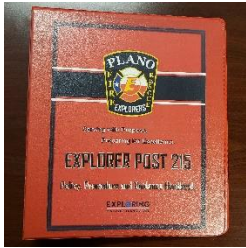
In 2019 Explorers spent a lot of time positively representing Plano Fire-Rescue at city events as well as providing valuable life safety education at various community activities. The Post has a long-standing tradition of playing an integral part of staffing Fire-Rescue tables and acting as *Sparky the Fire Dog*. 2019 was no different.



- **Roster**

Explorer membership was increased from twelve to seventeen and the Advisor roster was increased from five to ten. Volunteer Advisors (non PFR personnel) were added to supplement Advisor needs / bridge the gap that sometimes exists when trying to ensure the “two-deep” adult leadership that is required for Post activities. The membership structure was also changed to provide a true chain-of-command that delegates authority, creates lines-of-authority and establishes an appropriate span-of-control.

- **Creation and Institution of a Comprehensive Explorer Handbook and Accompanying Collateral**



Prior editions of the Explorer Handbook were insubstantial and did not provide sufficient guidance. When asked, Explorers produced two versions. Using a collaborate approach involving Explorers, past editions of the handbook, PFR Standard Operating Procedure for the Explorer program and guidelines from Learning For Life a comprehensive guidance document was created to identify the principles and practices necessary to build and sustain a first class Post. Additionally all legal documents necessary for Post operations were identified and produced.

- **Challenge Coin Design / Fundraising Project**

Explorers decided to design their own challenge coin celebrating the completion of the Posts’ 25<sup>th</sup> year in existence. The coin features their slogan “Serving With Purpose / Preparing For Excellence” and their self-identified Post Values of Integrity, Excellence, Service, Professionalism, Growth, Leadership, and Teamwork. The coin has been used in a variety of ways to support the programs goals such as a way to thank guest instructors, mounted on Explorer career achievement plaques and used as a fundraiser which provided enough financial support to procure Class A uniforms.



- **Dallas Fire Games**



For the third time in as many years PFR Post 215 Explorers returned home with the “big trophy” from the “hose-off event” at the Annual Dallas Fire Games competition. Post 215 sent two four-member teams to the competition that occurred on April 27<sup>th</sup> at the Dallas Fire-Rescue training facility. In addition to placing first in the hose-off event our teams placed third in the Room Search event as well. Post 215 is the only Post to have won the hose-off competition for three years in a row!



## NEW PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES

- **Annual Awards Program**

An Annual recognition program was developed and implemented which resulted in numerous recognitions being awarded in June. Explorers were nominated and selected by a committee of their peers for a variety of accomplishments. Several Explorers received their career achievement plaques as they left the Post.



- **Formal Leadership Changes**



The number of Explorer Officer positions increased from two to five and the way in which Explorers were appointed was changed to look more like the civil service promotional system that PFR uses. By increasing the number of Explorer Officer positions, it provides more Explorers the opportunity to experience a formal leadership role while meeting the administrative needs of the Post. Two Explorer Lieutenant exams were held and three Lieutenants were promoted in 2019.

- **Committees**

Properly run committees provide an organization's membership opportunities to express ownership in their organization and offers them some control of their own destiny. Five committees were established in 2019: one ad-hoc committee (Bunker Gear) and 4 standing (Recognition, Benevolence, Community Service and Fundraising). Each committee has several members and is chaired by an Explorer Officer.

- **Explorer Website**

To help market the Post, solicit and collect support, and build the Post's credibility Explorers created and began to maintain their own website ([www.planofireexplorers.org](http://www.planofireexplorers.org)). The website also serves as an online resource to Explorers and Advisors for documents and information.

- **Annual Service Project**

A large-scale endeavor to make an impact on the Plano community was created with the Annual Service Project (ASP). The ASP provides Explorers with an opportunity to not only make an impact but gain experience designing, planning, implementing and reviewing a large-scale project. Proposals for the project were accepted at the end of 2018 and voted upon by membership in early 2019. The inaugural project involved fire hydrant inspection and maintenance and it was a huge success. See more about this further on in this document.



- **Summer Internship Program**



The operation of fire service organizations involves much more than jumping on apparatus and responding to incidents. To provide insight into what it takes to run a fire department two Explorers were selected to participate in the first Explorer Summer Internship program. The internship program started with two weeks of exposure to all administrative / support divisions of the organization as well visits to other city departments (Public Safety

Communications and the Shop). It concluded with three 24-hour ride-alongs so that the interns could experience an entire shift / shift life at the station. The program received great feedback from all involved.

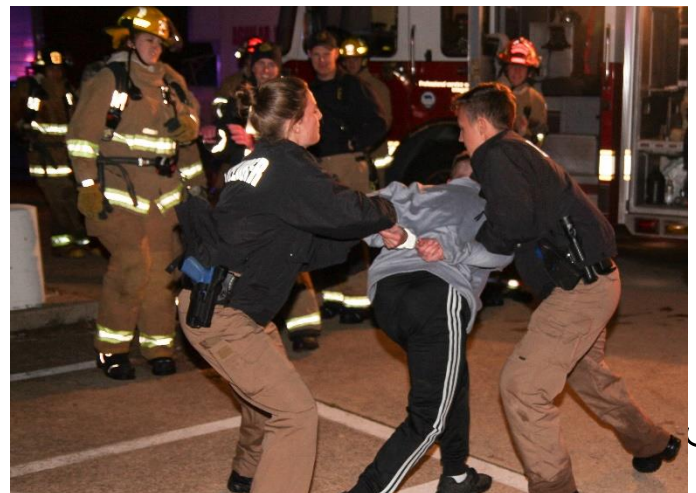
- **9/11 Memorial Stair Climb**

Two Explorers joined six Plano Firefighters at the *Climb For A Calling* 9/11 memorial stair climb event at Burnett Plaza in Fort Worth on Sunday September 8<sup>th</sup>. The climb involved a vertical trek of 110 floors while wearing a complete set of fire gear. This incredible feat was done to remember and honor the sacrifices of first responders on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001.



- **Time Together with Plano Police Explorer Post 911**

Police and Fire Explorers met together five times in 2019 during a fire training day, a police training day, a bike ride through the eastern part of Plano, involvement in a firefighter-down scenario at PPD Explorer's annual *Plano X* competition and a Christmas party. Extremely positive feedback about this "cross-pollination" has been received from Explorers and Advisors of both Posts.





## Community Service: *Impacts Through Excellent Service*



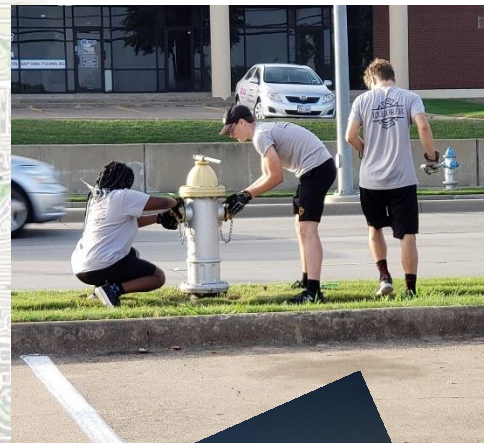
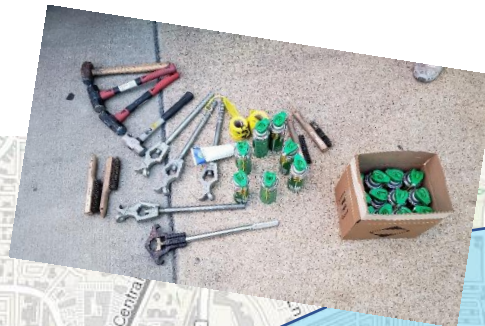
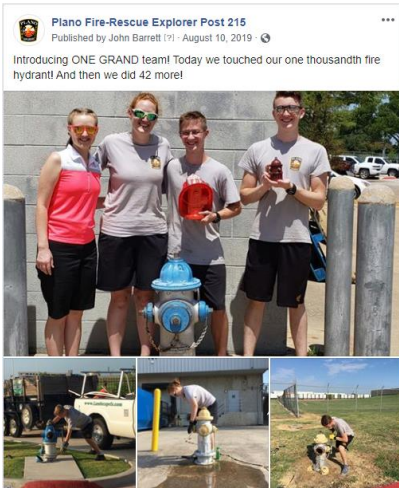
Post 215 members contributed nearly **750** hours of service to the community at **35** separate events in 2019. Some of these events included Plano After Dark, Vacation Safety School, Plano's All American 4<sup>th</sup>, Balloon Fest and their Annual Service Project.



The 2019 Annual Service Project involved **490** individual hours of fire hydrant inspection and maintenance during **17** work shifts in an area that covered just under **10%** of the City of Plano (nearly seven square miles)!



During their work Post members performed maintenance and inspection on **1,246** hydrants and found that **191** (nearly 15%) of them needed some type of repair. Their work was instrumental in helping identify a significant issue that affects PFR's ability to provide fire protection and has the potential to affect the safety of PFR crews. Because of their work and finding the City has taken steps to not only identify and fix current problems but also to make sure that maintenance and inspection continues. The majority of the area covered was in the older part of town and is represented by the shaded area below.





## 2019 Recognitions: *Rewarding Excellence*

With the creation of the Explorer Handbook came a formal recognition program.

These recognitions are either awarded based upon merit (for example: attendance, years of service) or through peer nominations. The Recognition Committee accepted and decided upon nominations and planned and executed the Awards Night. This year's recognition recipients included:

- **Rookie of the Year:** Arris Robinson
- **Explorer of the Year:** Thomas Price
- **Officer of the Year:** Matt Engels
- **Outstanding Attendance:** Matt Engels, Tyler Pringle
- **Service Before Self:** Matt Engels
- **Leadership By Example:** Tyler Pringle
- **Outstanding Achievement:** Zach Harrison
- **3 Years of Service:** Tres Hoard III
- **Advisor of the Year:** Stephanie Bouillon-Mayer
- **Special Recognition:** Gwen Allen



When an Explorer reaches the end of their "Explorer career" the Post now provides them with a *Career Achievement Plaque* that displays their time of service and any recognitions that they received while serving. In 2019 three Career Achievement Plaques were presented to Adam Fey, Malena Moore, and Rose Beck.





# 2020 Goals: *Pursuing Excellence*

- **Maintain the Post**

Identify and ensure that the practices, activities and conditions that help us accomplish our mission and vision, have contributed to our success and/or add value to the Post and its members are continued. Improve upon those actions, practices and conditions that are areas of weakness. Eliminate actions, practices, conditions and activities that do not add value to the Post and/or its members.

- **Handbook Revision**

With a year of operating under the first version of a comprehensive Explorer Handbook some need for revisions has been identified by Post membership. After this revision it is expected that the Handbook will need to be reviewed and potentially revised every two years thereafter.

- **Leadership Training for Explorer Officers**

Great leadership is intentional therefore building great leaders can be no different. In 2020 the current youth leadership will be assigned the task of reading leadership books in order to help them grow as leaders as well as to identify key points that will be used to develop a formal leadership training program for both current and future Explorer Officers.



- **Improved Annual Service Project and Summer Internship Program**

With the inaugural activities completed, feedback from stakeholders was solicited to determine how these programs could be improved. It is our hope to do even bigger and better things with these programs in 2020.

- **Advisors Taking On Lead Roles**



In 2019 the majority of activities were led by the Post Committee Chair (PCC). This was both intentional and important so that the PCC could gain valuable insight into how the program functioned, identify issues during the transition in program scope and leadership as well as provide consistency in how these issues were addressed. Moving forward more Advisors will need to become involved and “take the lead” of Post activities – particularly in their areas of interest/passion.

- **Formal Curriculum Delivery**

The purchase of a formal training curriculum (*Essentials 7 Instructor Resource Kit*) will not only help provide Explorers a formalized training program with instruction and formal application of relevant knowledge and skills now it will also help prepare them for success in a future fire academy setting.

- **Provide Formal Instruction in Health Matters**

Inform and influence Post members to take ownership in their health through nutritional education, meal preparation and instruction on proper exercise techniques and good fitness routines.

- **Funding**

Identify and attempt to secure all means of funding available to the Post. The two largest sources of revenue for the Post continue to be department funding and donations. It is anticipated that the Explorer Post will gain its own line of funding in the PFR budget in FY 20/21. If approved as submitted it should cover all essential program elements. Additional funding needs will have to come from fundraising efforts by Post members.