

Thrills that fulfill families of Philly's finest

By William Kenny

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For the families of police and firefighters killed in the line of duty, the headlines never seem to stop coming.

Each death brings days of intense news media coverage of the tragedy as well as efforts by the law enforcement community to capture any culpable parties.

Viewings, funerals and criminal court proceedings renew the public spectacle often weeks and months after the fact.

Eventually, the headlines do pass, but the needs of the surviving families remain.

The goal of the Hero Thrill Show is to provide for those families in one specific area, the education of their children.

Last week, Philadelphia's political and public safety leaders joined with local celebrities during a lunchtime pep rally in Center City to plea for public support of the Thrill Show's mission.

In short, they want folks to buy tickets to the Sept. 18 event at the Wells Fargo Center (the former Wachovia Center) in South Philly.

Since the mid-1800s, when the city's police and fire departments began compiling lists of officers and firefighters lost in the line of duty, each department has seen more than 280 of its members killed. Funds are needed now more than ever for scholarships because of the large number of police and firefighters killed in recent years.

"All of their children have to be provided for. All of those families are here today and we will always be with them," Hero Thrill Show chairman James Binns said during the Sept. 1 rally outside of the Marathon Grill at 19th and Market streets.

The families of deceased police and firefighters did



JENNY SWIGODA / TIMES PHOTOS

A rally was held on Sept. 1 for the Hero Thrill Show at 18th and Market streets in Center City. The Hero Thrill Show will be held at the Wells-Fargo Complex on Sept. 18. All proceeds will benefit the Hero Scholarship Fund. (Left) Mayor Michael Nutter and Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey (below) addressed the crowd during the rally.

not speak publicly at the event, but instead they mingled among the crowd of hundreds, listening to music presented by guests hosts WOGL DJ Bob Pantano and boxing announcer Nino Del Buono.

Mayor Michael Nutter, District Attorney Seth Williams, Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey and Fire Commissioner Lloyd Ayers all made the event, as did police union president John McNesby and firefighters union president Bill Gault.

Other noted attendees included basketball guru Sonny Hill, the Phillie Phanatic and Eagles cheerleaders.

The Thrill Show's star attractions, members of the police department's Motorcycle Drill Team, rumbled their Harley-Davidsons down Market Street and parked them curbside for inspection by an enthusiastic audience.

The Sept. 18 show will run from noon to 5 p.m. and also feature demonstrations by the police aviation unit, bomb squad, SWAT, K-9 unit, marine unit,

crime scene unit, narcotics unit bicycle stunt team and firearms instructors, as well as presentations by a variety of specialty fire department units and the Police and Fire Pipes and Drums band.

Admission to the event costs \$10 per person. The Hero Thrill Show Inc. is an IRS-registered non-profit organization. It has organized the show since 2006 and is not affiliated with the Hero Scholarship Fund, which organized the show from 1954 to 2005.

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