

The Matthew T. Bunch Foundation is sponsoring a Cinco de Mayo Fiesta and Cook Off at the Tampa Firefighters Museum on Friday, May 5, 2017, 6 to 9 p.m. In Mexico, Cinco de Mayo is observed in remembrance of the Mexican Army's unlikely victory over French forces at the battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. In America, Cinco de Mayo is a celebration of Mexican American culture. For the Matthew T. Bunch Foundation, Cinco de Mayo has taken on significance for a different and very special reason.

Background:

Driver/Engineer Bunch was hired by Tampa Fire Rescue in September 2009. In September 2014, he was diagnosed with a very rare and aggressive cancer. His brothers and sisters at Tampa Fire Rescue came together in support of Mathew hosting many events as he sought treatment for a cure. After fighting bravely for eight months, Matthew passed away on May 5, 2015, at the age of 27, on the very day that Tampa Fire Rescue had planned a fundraiser for his benefit at the Bad Monkey in Ybor City. The event took place with an incredible turnout as his Tampa Fire Rescue family and friends remembered him with honor showing a level of support his family had not expected or ever experienced.

A week later Tampa Fire Rescue held a Celebration of Life for Driver/Engineer Bunch at Water Works Park in Tampa followed by a reception at the Tampa Firefighters Museum. Again, Matthew's family was overwhelmed by the beautiful ceremony held in his honor, with Mayor Bob Buckhorn and TFR Chief Thomas Forward in attendance, Tampa Police Department motorcade, and approximately 300 of his Tampa Fire Rescue family as well. The Bunch family decided shortly after that we would give back to Tampa Fire Rescue in an effort to express our gratitude for their many acts of generosity.

In early 2016, Matthew's family started the Matthew T. Bunch Foundation with the specific mission of supporting Tampa Fire Rescue and their associated organizations and charities.

In May 2016, the Matthew T. Bunch Foundation hosted its first event at the Bad Monkey and raised funds for the benefit of Tampa Firefighters Museum, Tampa Firefighters Charity Fund, and Friends of Tampa Fire. In November 2016, the foundation sponsored a Tampa Fire Rescue Women & Wine Evening at the Tampa Firefighters Museum in support of the Women of Tampa Fire Rescue.

This year the foundation will sponsor a Cinco de Mayo Fiesta at the Tampa Firefighters Museum and will feature a Cook Off, Mexican Food and Refreshments, Live Entertainment, and Activities for Children. As we celebrate Cinco de Mayo this year, remembering Driver/Engineer Bunch, our hope is that it is a time of "Fun" Raising and Festivities. Donations will graciously be accepted. For further information visit the Matthew T. Bunch Cinco de Mayo Facebook page.