

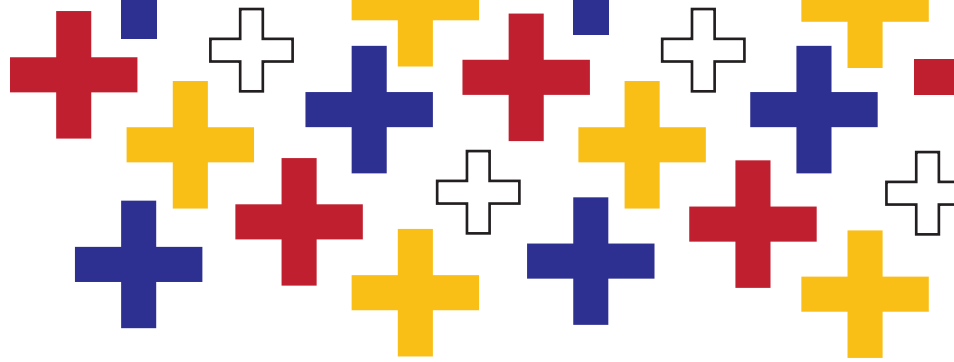


# FIREFIGHTER HEALTH FORUM

Presented by MnFIRE

**JANUARY 24-25, 2025**

Grand Casino Mille Lacs



## Schedule

### FRIDAY, JAN. 24

7–9 PM **Hospitality Room**

### SATURDAY, JAN. 25

7:30–8 AM **Registration**

8–9 AM **Breakfast and Welcome**

9–10 AM **Keynote Presentation**

The Resilient Responder

10 AM – Noon **Morning Breakout Sessions**

LivingWorks safeTALK Suicide Prevention Training

- General Firefighter Health Training
- Streamlining Firefighter Fitness, Training and Nutrition
  - First Responder Safety and Self-Defense

Noon – 1 PM **Lunch**

Meal time includes:

- A short presentation from NIOSH on National Firefighter Registry for Cancer
- Book signing with Ali Rothrock

1–1:15 PM **Break**

1:15–3:15 PM **Afternoon Breakout Sessions**

LivingWorks safeTALK Suicide Prevention Training

- General Firefighter Health Training
- Sleep and Cardiovascular Health for Firefighter Families

3:15–3:30 PM **Break**

3:30–4 PM **Hip/Shoulder Flow for Occupational Athletes**

4–4:15 PM **Closing Remarks & Survey Door Prize Drawing**

## Session Descriptions

### KEYNOTE PRESENTATION | 9–10 AM

#### The Resilient Responder

*Ali Rothrock*

In this keynote address, firefighter/EMT and crisis counselor Ali Rothrock will explore the experiences she had at the beginning of her fire service career that impacted where she is today. This presentation will explore the importance of pre-, peri- and post-traumatic factors as they relate to resilience, will discuss strategies for building resilience in high-stress environments, and will offer proactive strategies to foster resilience both on the job and off.

### MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS 10 AM –NOON

#### LivingWorks safeTALK Suicide Prevention Training Part 1

*Rochelle Hawthorne, Sara Nelson*

The statistics are well-known: paramedics and firefighters are at a higher risk of dying by suicide than the general population. This four-hour training (split between two-hour sessions in the morning and afternoon) will equip you to be more alert to someone thinking of suicide and better able to connect them with further help. Using a simple yet effective model, LivingWorks safeTALK empowers everyone to make a difference. With over 120,000 people trained each year, it's the world's fastest-growing suicide prevention skills training course. We recommend MnFIRE peer supporters choose this breakout session, but everyone is welcome.

#### General Firefighter Health Training Part 1

Learn from a variety of health experts on how to better care for yourself and cultivate a healthy lifestyle in the fire service by discussing topics like functional fitness, nutrition, sleep, cardiovascular health and more.

## 1.1 Streamlining Firefighter Fitness, Training and Nutrition

*Blake Christensen*

Certified personal trainer and nutritionist Blake Christensen will discuss:

- How to streamline health and well-being by combining today's exercise science with fire training to improve your skills and fitness.
- How to make better use of your money and time when it comes to optimizing your nutrition in and out of the firehouse.

## 1.2 First Responder Safety and Self-Defense

*Kasey Keckeisen*

In this session, Ramsey County Deputy Kasey Keckeisen will cover how to:

- Build a solid foundation to deal with life's stresses and to recover from traumatic events.
- Develop the skills required to thrive in an ever more challenging world.
- Use the challenges of the world to enhance the experience of living and to live a more fulfilling life.
- Help people develop and maintain their best selves, and to use those skills to help others.

cardiovascular disease, firefighter cardiovascular health, best metrics of fitness and ways to optimize cardiovascular health.

## CLOSING SESSION | 3:30–4 PM

### Hip/Shoulder Flow for Occupational Athletes

*Blake Christensen*

Led by Blake Christenson from Iron Maltese Athletics as a follow-up to his breakout class on firefighter fitness, we will wrap up a full day of learning with this interactive hip and shoulder flow. This session is focused on firefighter fitness and readiness, showing you simple movements you can use to help decrease your injury risk and raise your ceiling potential.

## Speakers

### Ali Rothrock

Ali Rothrock is an author, speaker, educator and advocate for first responder mental health. As the Founder & CEO of On the Job and Off, an online platform dedicated to building more resilient first responders, she draws from her own experience as a volunteer firefighter and emergency medical technician. Ali is also the Executive Director of First Responders Care, a nonprofit whose flagship course The C.A.R.E.S. Project educates first responders on how to recognize and report signs of child abuse, neglect, and trafficking. Ali holds certifications in both crisis counseling and trauma response, and she is a behavioral health specialist with the Medical Reserve Corps. Ali has also worked as a sexual assault and domestic violence counselor. Ali has published two books: "Where Hope Lives", and "After Trauma: Lessons on Overcoming from a First Responder Turned Crisis Counselor". Ali has an associate degree in fire science, a bachelor's degree in psychology: crisis counseling, and a master's degree in human services: trauma, resilience, self-care strategies. She moves often with her husband who is in the Air Force.

### Rochelle Hawthorne, MA, MS, LPC, FF/EMT-P

Rochelle Hawthorne is a full-time firefighter paramedic, SWAT medic and licensed mental health counselor. She specializes in treating trauma and works primarily with first responders and their families. She is a

## AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS 1:15–3:15 PM

### LivingWorks safeTALK Suicide Prevention Training Part 2

*Rochelle Hawthorne, Sara Nelson*

See overview description in morning breakout sessions section.

### General Firefighter Health Training Part 2

See overview description in morning breakout sessions section.

### 2.1 Sleep and Cardiovascular Health for Firefighter Families

*Dr. Nick Blonien*

Dr. Nick Blonien, a MnFIRE medical expert, will dive in on all things sleep and cardiovascular health in this interactive session. You will learn about sleep science basics, impacts of sleep on the fire service, and tools for optimizing sleep quality. During the second half of the session, Dr. Blonien will discuss

LivingWorks ASIST Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention trainer, a LivingWorks safeTalk Suicide Alert trainer and an ICISF Group Crisis Intervention trainer. She currently serves as the MnFIRE Peer Support team manager, and is responsible for daily operations of the MnFIRE Peer Support hotline, Peer Support team data tracking and management, and Peer Support team member recruitment, retention and education.

### **Sara Nelson, MPS, LADC**

Sara Nelson has experience working in public and community health, as well as legislative experience working for the Department of Human Services in a Governor appointed role on the State Advisory Council on Mental Health and Subcommittee on Mental Health. Sara has taken on a consulting role with PRO Network to build and develop a Substance Use Disorder Intensive Outpatient Treatment Program for police, paramedics and other helping professionals, and she recently completed a Master of Professional Studies in addiction counseling with a pending license as a licensed alcohol and drug counselor.

### **Blake Christenson**

Blake Christenson is the owner and founder of Iron Maltese Athletics. Founded in 2014, Iron Maltese Athletics is an occupational athletics solutions company providing guidance towards health and wellness challenges facing fire, police, military or other occupations required to be fit for service. Iron Maltese Athletics has worked with departments and firefighters across Minnesota and the nation. Blake is a certified personal trainer, certified nutritionist, and certified in Functional Movement Systems (FMS) Level 1 and 2. Blake also has over 12 years of firefighting and EMS experience in multiple agencies giving him on-the-job perspective to the challenges that face occupational athletes today.

### **Ramsey County Deputy Kasey Keckeisen**

Kasey Keckeisen is a 7th degree black belt in Jujitsu, a police officer, the executive officer of a law enforcement tactical team, a husband and father of three daughters. All of these factors, along with his love of physical culture, fueled a passion for helping others strive to be their best selves. Developing the resiliency needed not only to face life's challenges, but to find joy in the journey is the foundation from

which Kasey approaches training and coaching. Along with his work with 500 Rising, Kasey works with Core Coaching International and has developed the TYR program (Train Your Resiliency) to help first responders engage in the often ignored mental health aspects of the profession.

### **Nick Blonien, DO**

Dr. Nick Blonien completed medical school at Des Moines University in 2016 under military scholarship. After graduation, he completed internship training at Naval Medical Center San Diego and went on to serve briefly as a General Medical Officer for the Marines before training to become a naval flight surgeon. From 2018 to 2021, he was the sole physician for a remote military air station where he also provided medical directorship to the airfield's crash and fire rescue department. After separation from service, Dr. Blonien completed residency training in occupational medicine through HealthPartners. He currently works as a faculty physician for HealthPartners Occupational Medicine and provides medical directorship to MnFIRE. His professional interests include lifestyle medicine, total worker health, and optimizing performance of the tactical athlete.



**REGISTER TODAY**

[mnfireinitiative.com/firefighter-health-forum](https://mnfireinitiative.com/firefighter-health-forum)



**FIREFIGHTER  
HEALTH  
FORUM**

*Presented by MnFIRE*