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## MOFD takes to intersections for annual Fill The Boot fundraiser

By Vera Kochan



MOFD Engineer Matt Lopez (left) and Firefighter-Paramedic Garrison Feil sweep the intersection of Rheem Boulevard and Moraga Road. Photos MOFD Captain Jacob Airola

Local residents traveling through the intersection of Rheem Boulevard and Moraga Road on May 2 between 9 a.m. and noon were witness to the annual Moraga-Orinda Fire District's fundraiser, Fill The Boot. Approximately six off-duty firefighters from the town's stations 41 and 42 were in evidence collecting cash donations from drivers, cyclists and pedestrians whenever a red light made it safe to do so.

Fill The Boot began in 1954, when the International Association of Firefighters partnered with the Muscular Dystrophy Association. The goal was to raise awareness and funds to ensure effective treatments and therapy to combat neuromuscular diseases such as spinal muscular atrophy, Pompe disease and Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. According to a joint statement, to date, over 300,000 firefighters across the country have raised over \$679 million since the venture's inception. Much of the funding has led to 14 new FDA-approved treatments within the past six years.

"It's not just about finding cures," stated MOFD Captain Jacob Airola. "It's also about the quality of life. We want to make sure that the kids have a chance to enjoy themselves by going to one of the many MDA Summer Camps nationwide. We also volunteer at the one in Occidental."

Airola and Firefighter-Paramedic Andrew Leach, who is this year's primary organizer, pointed out that "there are state and federal laws that allow firefighters to collect funds at intersections as long as you wear your helmet and gear. And, in Canada."

MOFD's goal was to collect "between \$4,000 - \$5,000," they stated. "Today's total was \$5,687."

For anyone who missed a chance to Fill The Boot in Moraga, MOFD's next fundraiser will take place in Orinda on May 12 between 9 a.m. and noon at the intersection of Brookwood Road and Camino Pablo. Participating firehouses 43, 44 and 45 are setting a collection goal of \$7,000 - \$8,000.

Donations can also be made online at: <https://filltheboot.donordrive.com>.



MOFD Engineer Matt Epperson collects donations from young philanthropists excited to get their "I donated"

stickers. Photos MOFD Captain Jacob Airola

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