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All Fired Up

Friendship Firehouse celebrates 251 years.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The Friendship Firehouse Festival celebrated the 251st anniversary of the founding of the city's first fire company Aug. 2 at the historic Friendship Firehouse Museum on South Alfred Street.

Now in its 29th year, the festival is sponsored by the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association and Historic Alexandria. Crowds lined up for tours of the museum as attendees learned about the city's historic firefighting apparatus and checked out modern firefighting equipment on display.

"Living here is so fun. We get to see the fire trucks."

—Alejandro Riesenber, 7

"This is always a wonderful festival," said Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association board vice president Tim Winkle. "We have the Alexandria Fire Department here as well as the police department and sheriff's office so it's a great opportunity to celebrate together."

In addition to tours of the Friendship Firehouse Museum, festivalgoers learned about fire safety and had the opportunity to see Alexandria Fire Department equipment up close.

The festival also included music perfor-

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PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET



Attendees enjoy the Aug. 2 Friendship Firehouse Festival celebrating the 251st year of the founding of fire fighting in Alexandria.



A young visitor looks at a firefighting display Aug. 2 at the Friendship Firehouse Museum.



A volunteer shows a young attendee how to safely put out a fire at the Aug. 2 Friendship Firehouse Festival.



Visitors look at the restored fire hose reel at the Friendship Firehouse Museum Aug. 2



Sophia Wagner drives the fire truck as dad Nick Wagner looks on during the Aug. 2 Friendship Firehouse Festival.



Attendees wait to get a closer look at an Alexandria fire truck Aug. 2 at the Friendship Firehouse Festival.

Friendship Firehouse Celebrates 251 Years

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mances, face painting, and displays by community organizations and local vendors.

Younger attendees participated in hands-on activities with all chil-

dren receiving free toy Friendship firefighting helmets.

"Living here is so fun," said Alejandro Riesenberg, a 7-year-old student at St. Mary's School who attended the festival with his broth-

er Lucas. "We live on the street and get to see the fire trucks."

Established in 1774, the Friendship Fire Company was the first fire company in Alexandria. Today the Friendship Firehouse, built in

1855, is a museum open to the public.

The Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association is a philanthropic organization focusing on fire-fighting history and fire safety. It re-

mains active in community events, including the annual Festival, and supports historic preservation of the building and its collection.

www.alexandriava.gov/FriendshipFirehouse



Brothers Alejandro and Lucas Riesenberg enjoy the Aug. 2 Friendship Firehouse Festival.



Caity and Bryce Tompkins enjoy the Friendship Firehouse Festival Aug. 2.



Young visitors play inside an Alexandria fire truck during the Aug. 2 Friendship Firehouse Festival.