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Meet a Scientologist—Judy Fagerman, Leading Scientology Volunteer Ministers of the Tampa Bay Area

For the past 10 years, Scientologist Judy Fagerman has been coordinating the Scientology Volunteer Ministers of Tampa Bay, Florida. This is her story.

The bright yellow tent of the Scientology Volunteer Ministers is drawing crowds at the Manatee County Fair in Palmetto, Florida. Best known for their ready response and effective help in times of disaster that earned them the Governor's Points of Light award in 2005, the Tampa Bay Volunteer Ministers, led by Scientologist Judy Fagerman, are there to help with all of life's disasters—great and small.

Fagerman began coordinating the Tampa Bay Volunteer Ministers program in 2001, when she learned firsthand the importance of the program.

"I grew up in New York. When 9/11 happened, I couldn't believe it. My husband and I watched the news and we cried. It was as though we could feel the grief of the families of all those who died," she says.

Although physically going through the motions in Florida, her heart was in New York. Despite her responsibilities in the telecommunications company she ran with her husband, Fagerman left for New York to help and stayed for a month.

She and another Volunteer Minister visited 26 fire stations throughout New York City to console the firefighters, nearly all of whom had lost friends or family members at Ground Zero. Fagerman provided Scientology assists—techniques developed by L. Ron Hubbard that help the individual recover from stress and trauma.

"That experience changed my life as I learned the beauty of doing something effective to help someone," says Fagerman. "The firefighters appreciated our care. They experienced so much relief. What is so special about being a Volunteer Minister is you have the tools to help another, so instead of simply talking or trying to explain, you can *do* something for someone."

On returning to Florida, Fagerman continued what she had begun in New York, visiting fire stations in Clearwater, Largo and Belleair.

"There is such a brotherhood among firefighters and I knew the events of September 11th would have been hard on them too," she says.

In 2001, Fagerman took on coordinating the Tampa Bay Scientology Volunteer Ministers, first in a volunteer capacity and later as a staff member of the Church of Scientology of Tampa.

She led more than 300 Volunteer Ministers in disaster response after Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne in 2004 and the Florida team that went to Louisiana and Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina the following year. She helped mobilize Volunteer Ministers for Indonesia and other devastated countries after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, Haiti in 2010, and Japan in 2011.

Fagerman learned about Scientology in 1973. A “normal” high school student at the time, life was a seemingly endless parade of arguments with her parents, boyfriend trouble and communication problems. Her sister, a Scientologist, encouraged her to take the Communication Course at the Church of Scientology of New York.

“It was life-changing to find out that getting your communication across includes taking responsibility for listening. I’d had so much attention on what *I* needed to say that I had no attention on the *other* person—I just *expected* them to understand me,” she says.

She describes living with Morgan, her husband of 25 years, as “being married to my best friend,” and she finds life tremendously rewarding.

“Scientology is about helping,” she says. “It’s about learning how to take better care of yourself, your loved ones, your neighbors, your community.

It's not about a lot of "talk"—it's about *doing* something for someone. It's about reaching out and taking responsibility for people. Being trained as a Scientology Volunteer Minister is like having a full toolbox for anything that comes up in life. It's there to be used."

To learn more about the Scientology Volunteer Ministers or enroll on free online courses, visit www.volunteerministers.org. To meet other Scientologists and watch their videos, visit www.Scientology.org.

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The popular "Meet a Scientologist" profiles on the Church of Scientology International Video Channel at Scientology.org now total more than 200 broadcast-quality documentary videos featuring Scientologists from diverse locations and walks of life. The personal stories are told by Scientologists who are educators, teenagers, skydivers, a golf instructor, a hip-hop dancer, IT manager, stunt pilot, mothers, fathers, dentists, photographers, actors, musicians, fashion designers, engineers, students, business owners and more.

A digital pioneer and leader in the online religious community, in April 2008 the Church of Scientology became the first major religion to launch its own official YouTube Video Channel, with videos now viewed more than 6 million times.



Scientologist Judy Fagerman, Volunteer Minister
Coordinator of the Church of Scientology Tampa