

Support pours in for injured Fresno firefighter

By Hannah
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In video posted to the Facebook page of Soonji Lee, a Fresno firefighter is seen falling through the roof of a burning garage of a home near Manchester Shopping Center. Read the story:

<http://www.fresnobee.com/2015/03/29/4453073/developing-fresno-firefighter.html> THE FRESNO BEE

Fresnans, Californians and others far and wide are opening their hearts and wallets to support the family of Fresno firefighter Pete Dern, who was severely injured fighting a garage fire over the weekend.

Within hours of setting up a [fundraising page](#) for Dern's family, donations began pouring in, quickly surpassing the fund's \$2,000 goal. By Tuesday afternoon, almost 700 people had donated more than \$43,000.

Dern, 49, continues to use a ventilator to help him breathe but was able to recognize and respond to family members and friends when he saw them Tuesday morning, Fresno Fire Chief Kerri Donis said in an email that was sent to staff. He was in critical condition Tuesday afternoon, hospital spokeswoman Erin Kennedy said.

Officials say Dern has had one surgery and is expected to undergo a second on Wednesday to help remove burned tissue and graft skin to cover his wounds.

He's undergoing intensive treatment at the Leon S. Peters Burn Center for injuries he received after falling through the roof of a burning garage on Sunday.

The husband and father was leading several firefighters across the roof, poking holes to provide ventilation, when the roof collapsed. Video of the scene captured national attention this week.

The attention has helped bring much-needed support to Dern's family, Fresno Fire Department spokesman Pete Martinez said. The money raised will help cover unforeseen costs, like lost wages if Dern's wife takes leave from her job to care for him.

The Fresno Fire Department is helping field phone calls from organizations and citizens who want to do what they can to help out.

"People are calling in (saying) 'Hey, we're going to have an event (and) pass a hat around to collect money for the captain,'" Martinez said. He said American Ambulance is throwing a blood drive in Dern's honor on Friday and dozens of fire departments have sent their well-wishes on social media sites like Twitter.

"We've received so much support, it's been pretty awesome to witness it," Martinez said.

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