***Link to podcast:*** <https://soundcloud.com/user-760682593/cervera_the-resiliency-of-a-firefighter>

**Podcast Final Script-The Resiliency of a Firefighter**

(AMBI): Sirens wailing in the distance post in clear for :02 then fade under :04

(TRAX) SARAH CERVERA, BYLINE: Joe Arrington remembers the day when he had to rethink a decision that was going to transform his life.

He was taking a physical exam to become a firefighter. It was 9/11. The YEAR, 2001. The day the Twin towers in New York fell in what later became the worst terrorist attack on U.S. soil.

**(AX) JOSEPH ARRINGTON: The lieutenant that was in charge came in and said, “Hey, if anyone wouldn’t have gotten in those buildings today, this is not the job for you.” (3:47-3:53)**

(TRAX) CERVERA: That was Joe.

**(AX) ARRINGTON: Two people actually got up and walked out. (3:53-3:55) I never second-guessed that I would have, so I knew I was where I was supposed to be. (4:32-4:35)**

(TRAX) CERVERA: Joe has been with the San Antonio Fire Department since then for 19 years, first in the trenches responding to fires, car accidents, disasters, and for the past four years as a spokesperson. So, what keeps firefighters motivated to not quit even after facing near-death situations?

(SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC POST IN CLEAR :05 FADE UNDER :35)

(TRAX) CERVERA: In order to understand why Joe has remained a firefighter for so long we need to first comprehend his family history. To Joe, firefighting is a family tradition because...

**(AX) ARRINGTON: It has always been in my family. I had uncles that were firefighters, an uncle has now retired from the fire department. His two sons, my cousins, are also firefighters so it has always kind of been in my family. (2:50-2:58)**

(TRAX) CERVERA: Since the majority of Joe’s relatives are firefighters it comes as no surprise that as a child Joe was always hanging around fire stations.

**(AX) ARRINGTON: The earliest memory that I can think of is riding out with my uncle when I was little. (3:24-3:29)**

(TRAX) CERVERA: There is little wonder that Joe would follow in his relative’s footsteps, so the circumstances of 9/11 solidified his decision to pursue a career as a firefighter…but what Joe didn’t realize was…

**(AX) ARRINGTON: I didn’t know how crazy the job would be and the different opportunities and things I would see. (5:18-5:20)**

(TRAX) CERVERA: Being a firefighter proved to be CRAZY since day ONE when Joe was still considered a novice firefighter.

(SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC POST IN CLEAR :05 FADE UNDER :10)

(TRAX) CERVERA: Which brings us to the conflict Joe faced on his first day on the job. When Joe was getting ready to leave the station the unthinkable happened.

(ABMI): Sound of a car screeching and crashing post in clear for :02 then fade under :01

**(AX) ARRINGTON: We heard a “boom” outside and we turned around and a car had hit a telephone pole right across the street from the station. (7:55-8:00)**

(TRAX) CERVERA: What Joe saw next was horrific because a child was involved.

**(AX) ARRINGTON: The kid went through the windshield and landed about 20 feet out in front of the passenger side. (8:19-8:23)**

(TRAX) CERVERA: 20 FEET is a long way for a child to skid against hot, rough, concrete, but the child recovered.

(SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC POST IN CLEAR :10 FADE UNDER :18)

(TRAX) CERVERA: What could be crazier than a car wreck? How about being face to face with death?

(TRAX) CERVERA: In 2004, San Antonio Texas held the record for the largest chlorine spill in United States history. Two trains had crashed head-on, in Southwest Bexar County near Loop 1604 and Nelson Road causing the release of poisonous chlorine gas that killed three people.

Who was the first one at the scene?

**(AX) ARRINGTON: I was one of the first two people to enter in a level A hazmat suit and tried to find some people that were trapped on the other side of the train. (5:51-5:59)**

(TRAX) CERVERA: The layout of the trains confused Joe and his partner leaving them helpless and lost.

**(AX) ARRINGTON: ...because the trains had crashed the way they had they moved the train tracks. We got disoriented we are in fully incapsulated suits on-air limited amount of air. (9:46-9:54)**

(TRAX) CERVERA: Joe had to mentally go back to his training enabling him to walk out alive.

**(AX) ARRINGTON: We had to walk about a mile and a half we ran out of air and we had to be airlifted out. (9:55-9:59)**

(TRAX) CERVERA: Even after shaking hands with the grim reaper Joe never once thought of quitting his job. He got right back up and faced yet another bone-chilling emergency.

(AMBI): Sound of flames post in clear for :03 then fade under :01

(TRAX) CERVERA: This is the sound of flames similar to what Joe heard when he responded to a church fire by Woody Tucker Park in the wee hours of the morning.

**(AX) ARRINGTON: We pull out of the station and we can see a glow and we are thinking “this is going to be a big fire.” (16:56-17:00)**

(TRAX) CERVERA: Sure enough, it was a HUGE fire that resulted in Joe’s station dropping a second alarm because flames were pushing through the front doors. Joe couldn’t fathom how hot the flames had become.

**(AX) ARRINGTON: I remember getting out of the truck and being 30 yards from the fire and thinking “holy cow it is hot!” it feels like sunburn on my face as soon as I get out of the truck and we were across the street from it and I am thinking it’s going to be hot. (17:34-17:47)**

(TRAX) CERVERA: In the end, the fire did not result in any loss of life.

(SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC POST IN CLEAR :05 FADE UNDER 1:06)

(TRAX) CERVERA: So, in simplest terms, Joe remained a firefighter for 19 years because he loved his job. Looking back, Joe never once thought he made the wrong career choice because Joe believes firefighting is…

**(AX) ARRINGTON: …the greatest job in the world I have never once regretted it. There is the old saying, “that if you enjoy what you do you never work a day in your life.” (12:43-12:51)**

(TRAX) CERVERA: Though Joe may have endangered his life countless times as a firefighter, he refuses to be called a hero.

**(AX) ARRINGTON: The hero word, we hate that word, we are not. Heroes are your parents, your role models, we are just men and women that love our job and come to work and do it. Everyone has a role in our community everyone has an ability to make a difference this is how we choose to make our difference. (50:16-50:36)**

(TRAX) CERVERA: So, the next time you hear a firetruck’s siren, stop and reflect on the sacrifices those men and women will make because would you be willing to do the same?

(AMBI): Sound sirens wailing in the distance post in clear for :05 then fade under :07