



#I AM **Richmond 911** De De Byrd

Confidence and self-esteem are important to Delivia Byrd, and she wants to make sure that everyone she comes in contact with has those qualities.

An emergency communications officer with the Richmond Department of Emergency Communications (DEC) since January 2006, “De De,” as she is known at work, volunteers her time to help others in a wide range of organizations.

“I believe everyone out there deserves a chance,” De De said. “Everyone deserves to have a foundation.”

Education provides that foundation, she said, and for about four years, she has been teaching adult learners who need help in math, science and English to earn their General Equivalency Diploma, or GED. She tutors students in libraries, restaurants and her home for as long as they need help, she said.

In addition, she mentors children through the Richmond Police Department’s Mirror Me program and the Police Athletic League. She also works with other community organizations to reduce domestic violence and purchases toiletries to donate to shelters.

“I do it because I’m a firm believer that it only takes one human to be humane,” she said. “We take the time to be that one human here at the DEC daily.”

As one of about 54 full-time emergency communications officers, she answers and dispatches 911 calls for the Richmond Police Department,

Richmond Fire Department and the Richmond Ambulance Authority in the second-busiest emergency communications center in the commonwealth of Virginia. In 2018, the department received 446,191 calls.

“We are integral to citizens getting these great services,” she said. “We have empathy, compassion, and we’re great decision-makers.”

Handling life-and-death events daily takes a toll, though, on her and her co-workers, she said.

“It’s more than a job. It’s more than a paycheck. It takes an exceptional person to handle the stress and responsibility. We’re here for a greater reason.”

De De also is a general instructor and a certified training officer, assisting with the professional development of employees. During more than 13 years at DEC, she has earned numerous awards, but that is not what is most important to her.

“Over the years, I’ve saved a lot of police and citizens’ lives. It’s just natural for me to do it. When you walk in here, you never know what’s going to happen. Some days I’m frightened, and some days I’m ready. I’m courageous, and I fight the fear of the unknown.”



**Richmond Department
of Emergency Communications**

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