



#I AM Richmond 911 Dawn Bishop

Dawn Bishop says that she gets “the biggest rush” from helping her community – and it “runs in the family.”

An emergency communications officer with the Richmond Department of Emergency Communications since April 2018, she is the November 2019 #IamRichmond911 honoree.

“I enjoy helping people in their time of need,” Dawn said. “I try to be the calm voice, even when callers are having the worse tragedies they can imagine. If I’m calm, it will help them to be calm. ... I want the public to know that as soon as we have their address and what’s wrong, we’re already sending help their way.”

Dawn also volunteers at least 24 hours a month as a firefighter with Prince George County. She’s been involved with fire departments since age 16, she said, starting as a fundraiser with the women’s auxiliary and becoming a certified firefighter in 2015.

At least twice, she has been recognized for helping to save lives. On Oct. 11, 2015, she received a Lifesave Award from the Prince George County Fire and EMS Department for a 2014 incident in which she and two others saved a person who clinically died twice during sudden cardiac arrest.

“I was working a festival as a stand-by medic,” Dawn explains that day. “As we were packing up and leaving at the end of the day, a father and son were passing the area where we were, when the father started having chest pains ... We started doing vitals on him and ended up taking him to the closest hospital due to the severity of the pains. When we got to the hospital, he coded, and we all chipped in to bring him back.”

In July 2019, she came to the aid of a man and his children when a gate crashed through their car’s windshield at a youth baseball tournament in Lumberton, North Carolina. Dawn and her family were attending the tournament to watch her son play.

“I do everything from helping people put in smoke detectors up to working bad accidents,” she said. “You never know what you’re going to get.”

Married to an emergency medical technician who is also a volunteer firefighter, Dawn has three sons, ages 10, 12 and 20, and the oldest recently also became a certified firefighter.

“I want to be a role model for my children. If my kids see me taking time out of my day to make sure that others get the help they need, then it encourages them to do the same.”

Dawn also helps others as a member of the Red Knights Virginia Chapter 8 Motorcycle Club, which supports the Evans-Haynes Burn Center at the Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center. The organization provides toys for children being treated that they can keep.

“We’ve gotten feedback that the kids absolutely love it, and the parents are grateful,” Dawn said.

She and her husband have been members of the organization for about three years, and her two younger children are junior members as well.

“We try to do as much as we can together. ... I don’t want my kids to be thinking of themselves all the time. I want them to be willing to help people when they need it.”