



#I AM Richmond 911 April Tyler

Originally interested in a career in nursing or teaching, April Tyler applied for the communications officer position “fresh out of high school,” not really knowing what it entailed.

She developed a passion for the work of helping others, she said, and now describes herself as the “youngest oldest” person at the Department of Emergency Communications, having joined in February 2004. She is the October 2019 #IamRichmond911 honoree.

“I enjoy seeing the results of helping people. With 911, people are calling me for help, and I have an impact. I can see that I am helping,” April said. “The world is suffering every day. I see the struggles, and I feel like I’m doing something to help.”

“We’re behind the scenes, but we’re the first help they get. It’s just as important as those who respond to the scene. We help them through the first few minutes of their tragedy or problem.”

April has been a training officer for more than a decade, assisting with on-the-job training for new employees, which allows her to tell herself that she is still teaching, as she had planned, she said.

“I enjoy newcomers and meeting new students. It’s rewarding to see the students’ progress. I’m as excited as they are when they walk across the stage and finish the program. I feel like I was a part of that.”

Outside of work, April has been volunteering at A Grace Place, an adult day care center for people with disabilities, since she was in high school.

“It became a humbling experience to sit down and listen to stories with different people with different backgrounds and situations,” she said. “It’s like a coaching session. I’m helping them to meet their goals.”

She also volunteers at the schools of her three children, who are in pre-kindergarten, first grade and fifth grade.

“As a parent, it’s important to be involved in your child’s life, school and activities,” she said. “If you want to have a hand in things, it benefits you and your child to actually be there, and for the teachers to know your face and the principal to know your name.”

And she believes it’s good for the children – her own and their classmates – to see her in uniform.

“It helps at home for my kids to see law enforcement in a positive way: ‘My mom comes home in a uniform, and she’s nice.’ They are just as proud of this uniform as I am. ... When I go to help out at schools, they have hundreds of questions. I sit down at their small table and let them see that we’re here to help.”

“The uniform comes with a bad reputation that citizens have gotten one way or another that’s not the case. We’re put here as a service to the citizens of Richmond. Our relationship should be a positive one. You can come to us and get confirmation, kind words or advice. We’re approachable, and we’re here to help.”



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of Emergency Communications**

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