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# No two days are the same, as Brentwood Police officer learns along the way

BY CAROLE ROBINSON  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

A Brentwood Police officer Jamal Jones grew up in East Memphis. He was exposed to a lot of violence and drug use, but his strong family values and deep love kept him on the straight and narrow. He witnessed a lot of arrests for bad behavior but he also saw another side of law enforcement.

He recalled when he was about 8 years old and his mother had to go into work very early. It was 4 a.m. and she was taking Jamal and his siblings to his grandmother's house.

"She had a white Jeep Cherokee and had been having some problems with it," he said. "We heard a pop and then smoke. We got out of the car. Within seconds law enforcement showed up and helped us."

An officer took young Jones, his siblings and his mom to his grandmother's house.

"It was a great experience," he said.

And when the Shelby County officer repossessed his mother's truck, "they were very open, welcoming and

understanding," he said. "Officers even took us to school. Memphis was doing community policing."

In 2015 at the age of 16, Jones witnessed a drug bust gone bad when Memphis patrol officer Sean Bolton was shot on the street where Jones lived.

"I saw him laying there on the street," he said. "A bunch of officers came swarming down the street. I witnessed how they pulled together to help him and started first aid until the ambulance appeared. He revived enough to get into the ambulance but he died in the hospital."

At that moment Jones knew he wanted to be in law enforcement when he grew up.

"I always loved to be around people," he said. "I love talking with them. No two days are the same."

From changing a flat tire, catching a loose dog, jump-starting a vehicle, traffic stops that end up being a warning to finding a lost child who was actually hiding in the house, the little things matter as much as getting

drugs off the streets.

"The fun part is people call the police for anything," Jones said. "I believe in helping even during an arrest. Sometimes a person just needs someone to listen."

By the time he graduated high school, law enforcement had been tucked away in a memory. At Middle Tennessee State University Jones majored in fitness and performance and became a personal trainer. His life changed in Brentwood after a personal trainer interview. He started asking around about the Brentwood Police Department.

"There was something in my mission to do more to help people that was missing," he said. Story after story, "Everyone in Brentwood said there was no better place to work because the community is unlike other places."

He "was sold on Brentwood" and applied for a position with the BPD. On June 6, 2022, he took the oath and was an official Brentwood Police officer. His on-the-job trainer was Chief Rick Hickey, who has since retired. Turned out, Hickey was the client he met with at Chadwick's. During field training new officers were taught to be respectful and treat people as human beings.

"He Chief Hickey] spoke to [new officers] like a friend," Jones said. At that moment Jones knew he made the right decision to change his path in Brentwood.

"That's the type of leader I wanted to be under," he said. "God works his way."

After three years, Jones still loves his job. "It's been awesome!" he said. "It's about treating people with respect and communicate with people."

Whether it's a fight or shoplifting, people still need to be treated with respect, and be heard, according to Jones. Law enforcement see people mostly on their worst day.

One night on patrol in the southern area of the city Jones stopped two young men from Memphis who made an illegal U-turn. He talked with them, found drugs in the car and a failed-to-appear warrant in Metro.

"In the end, they said they respect-



CAROLE ROBINSON

Brentwood Police Officer Jamal Jones

ed being treated as real human beings and they want to turn their lives around, even though I was arresting them," Jones said.

At a traffic stop on Franklin Road the driver had a suspended license. He was en route to his job and had a lot going on trying to get his act together. Jones gave him advice about how to address the issue with the judge and to show the judge all the paperwork regarding his case.

"He said it was the first time an officer gave him a second chance," Jones said. "Often nobody wants to hear the whole story. Records aren't always who they are."

Jones really enjoys pulling over juvenile drivers. They usually think all officers are bad. He spends time talking with them and relating to them. Most of the people he grew up with went a different way with their lives. Jones wants to demonstrate law enforcement is a great career — it's not shooting and jail every day, but rather truly serving the community.

Jones hopes to one day be a canine officer and move up in the ranks, but

"wherever my career takes me, I really want to get drugs off the streets," he said. "I made a couple drug addict arrests. It defeats them every time. They're chasing a good feeling but there are other ways to get those good feelings."

While his degree didn't lead to a career, it's an important part of it.

"Physical fitness is important in law enforcement," he said. "We never know when we have to stop a fight, chase a predator or protect yourself. Exercise is a good relief for physical and emotional stress."



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## ON THE COVER:

TOP LEFT: **TONY TRUS IS A VOLUNTEER FIRE FIGHTER WITH WILLIAMSON COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE**  
PHOTO SUBMITTED

TOP RIGHT: **BRENTWOOD POLICE OFFICER JAMAL JONES**  
PHOTO BY CAROLE ROBINSON

BOTTOM LEFT: **NOLENVILLE POLICE LT. MATT NEAL**  
PHOTO BY CAROLE ROBINSON

BOTTOM RIGHT: **FAIRVIEW POLICE SGT. JAMEY MEADOWS**

PHOTO BY CAROLE ROBINSON

BACKGROUND: **FAIRVIEW FIRE FIGHTER DOMINIC THIESSEN**  
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## Franklin resident finds his niche through his job with city's fire department

BY CAROLE ROBINSON  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

To Franklin firefighter David Konstant, fighting fires is “the best job in the world.” However, it wasn’t his first choice as he headed off to college at Auburn University in Alabama. His plan was to study agriculture and fisheries, until he had a talk with his older brother, who was in the fire service. As his brother was telling stories about his job and how much he liked it, Konstant’s curiosity was piqued.

“When he introduced me to fire service, I knew what I wanted,” he said. “When I got into fire service, I fell in love and actually studied it.”

Konstant remained in college and joined the Lee County, Alabama, Volunteer Fire Department. Konstant stayed with the department for six years until he was hired by the Auburn city fire department. He was with the city for three years and would still be there except his wife,

also an Auburn graduate, was offered a job in Franklin. Before leaving Auburn he applied with the Franklin Fire Department and was hired in early 2018.

When the Konstants arrived in Franklin, “we fell in love with the city and the fire department. It’s great,” he said.

After establishing himself for several years, in school year 2022-2023 Konstant got the chance to share his enthusiasm and love for fire service when he asked to lead and revitalize the department’s Explorer program. Explorer programs introduce interested junior and senior high school students to basic firefighting skills.

“The goal was to introduce [students] to fire service,” Konstant said. “It allows them to take the firefighter I test, earn an Fire fighter I certificate and a leg up in fire service. That [assignment] led to meeting Kris Schneider, (assistant director of Williamson County Schools’ College Career &

Technical Education Department).”

The Explorer program was an eye opener to the interest in fire service, so Konstant and Schneider took another step and implemented the Internship Academy. The Academy is a paid 19-week program for recent high school graduates. It enables them to enter the Franklin Fire Recruit Academy, which is also used to train interns and part-time employees. Graduates of the Academy earn certifications that can give them a leg up in a career in fire service.

Hiring age in Franklin used to be 21 but has been reduced to 18. They recently hired five 18-year-olds who went through the Academy. That’s good news for students in the Fire Management class who decide to make fire service a career.

“When they go through the academy they get certifications to be hired anywhere,” Konstant said. “Explorers and Fire Management graduates can go the volunteer route, as well.



DAVID KONSTANT

They can scratch the fire fighter itch while doing something else [as a career].”

>>>KONSTANT, Continued on Page 7

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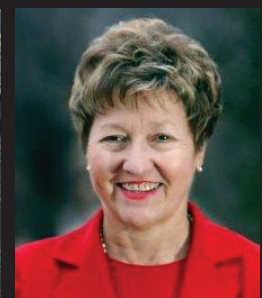
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## Konstant

Continued from Page 6

Konstant discovered he had another interest - teaching fire service to the youth in the community. Many are the kids who once got a thrill every time they visited the fire station; but lost it once they got older. Explorers are reigniting that interest.

The success of Explorers and the Academy led to the return of the Franklin Fire Department's Lead with Fire camp for rising nine through 12th graders. The camp introduces students fire service by using hands on training to learn firefighting skills such as vehicle extrication, handling hoses and search and rescue.

Working with Schneider and Dr. Jeremy Qualls, Career & Technical Education director, Konstant developed a Fire Management class for senior students beginning with

the county's class of 2026. The program will be held on the Williamson County campus of Columbia State Community College until the new building under construction at the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Center (EIC) is completed.

One of the goals of the Career and Technical Education program to get local industries and businesses involved so high school graduates don't have to leave the county for jobs. The Fire Management program will be taught by members of the Franklin Fire Department using actual firefighters as teachers with a goal is to build a foundation for the future in emergency services.

"They'll learn to pull hoses, throw ladders on buildings, building construction, handling tools and how to use them," Konstant said. "They'll learn to read a measuring tape and about basic screw drivers."

Students will also experience a live

burn and go through a heavy machinery class.

Franklin will be the first fire department in Tennessee to send paid firemen to teach high school classes, according to Jamie Melton, FFD Fire & Life Safety educator.

"This program shows college isn't for everyone," Konstant said. "Students who participate in the program can take their training anywhere."

The program is paired with Columbia State Community College so seniors can also take the EMT Basic course, Konstant said.

Konstant never thought implementing programs would lead to awards, but he's been the recipient of two awards since he began the education programs and classes. One was the Franklin Fire Department's Achievement Award and the most recent was Franklin Tomorrow's Emerging Leader Award.



SUBMITTED

Franklin Fire Fighter David Konstant accepts the Franklin Tomorrow's Emerging Leader Award from Kris Schneider, Assistant Director at the Williamson County Schools College, Career, & Technical Education Center. Schneider nominated Konstant for the award.



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# From barista to 911 operator

BY CAROLE ROBINSON  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

After Sarah Ashton graduated from high school in Dallas, she headed to Asbury College in Kentucky to study music education. After one year she realized, while she loved music, she really wasn't set on making it a career.

"I heard God tell me to move [to the Nashville area] in 2001," she said.

She returned to Dallas, went to work and saved money to make the move. It took a year, but she made it to Franklin and quickly got a job at Starbucks in Cool Springs.

"While here I met my husband," she said.

That was in 2003. They were married in 2004.

Her husband's job had the couple moving to different areas of the country — Oklahoma, where they lived for five years, and in 2009 their daughter was born; then California where their son was born in 2011. Each time they moved she was able to transfer to a Starbucks in the area.

After their daughter's teacher discovered she had ADD and worked with the family to help her, Ashton was inspired.

"Seeing what she did for kids who needed somebody to be there for them; I wanted to do something to impact people," Ashton said. "Starbucks had a college scholarship. I felt like I wanted to work somewhere where I can make a difference."

In 2018 Ashton returned to school, this time Arizona State's online program studying general psychology. She wanted to become a school counselor and help kids before rather than when they needed help.

"You really need to know how the brain works," she said.

She tossed criminology and criminal justice into her studies to learn about the other side of the coin.

"It hit me that school counselors are intervening for kids and are getting more frustrated," she said.

Ashton took courses in investiga-

tion, prison reform, criminal justice — and she had their third child. It was 2016 and she was dedicating herself to their children, family, school and Starbucks, "but I had something more to give," she said.

In 2020 her husband's company sent him to the Nashville office, which put them close to family. The Ashton family settled back in Spring Hill, and she returned to work at Starbucks, with a pay cut — enough to supplement until she found a way "to make a difference."

She graduated in 2022 with a degree in criminology and criminal justice.

The search for that avenue to making a difference began anew. Ashton and her husband took the Citizens Academy with the Spring Hill Police Department and she also took the Citizens Academy ATF with the Franklin Police department.

"I got to visit the 911 Center one night as a part of the program," Ashton said.

That visit was her a-ha moment. It took her back to one of her favorite television shows — Rescue 911. Ashton started thinking dispatch.

"I applied to dispatch in Brentwood," she said. "A week later a friend saw an opening for Williamson County. They spent time with me and we made connections. It felt like home."

She got the job and went into training to be a 911 dispatcher.

"I absolutely love what I do," she said.

She's currently in training again, to be a supervisor.

"My whole time with Starbucks, my priority was to create a good environment for everybody working there," she said. "There's no reason to not bring joy every day and pull it out of others with grace and fun."

Her training for dispatch taught her how to communicate with people, to calm them during a crisis by remaining calm and reassuring.

"I tell the things that makes them feel helpful," Ashton said. "Give them little tasks and calm them. I love to be there for those people. I do



SUBMITTED

911 Operator Sarah Ashton is presented the 2024 Bill Jorgensen Peer Award.

it to be helpful."

The people on the other end of the call can be impacted by just a few words of understanding and kindness on the worst day of their lives, or in the case of the time she helped a family member deliver a baby — their fifth or sixth child; the most wonderful day of their lives.

"The father called, they didn't get out of the driveway when the baby's head had already come out," she said. "Dad was heading to a neighbor who's a doctor and was trying to get back to Mom, who was left with their 'tween girl' and grandmother. Grandma helped deliver the baby."

Ashton guided them to get the baby breathing and get "the stuff out of his mouth."

When Dad and the doctor arrived to the scene they took over.

"It was the coolest thing to hear their happiness being there and being a part of it," Ashton said. "It was by far one of the best days. I had a trainer with me observing. She said,

"that was the coolest thing."

Then there are the calls about phones that fell through a grate, the person who locked himself out of his car, civil issues with neighbors, the rough calls such as finding someone dead. Ashton said dispatchers have to remain calm, follow protocols and keep to the script to get all the information. She recalled the lady who found her deceased dad and how she sounded and how she managed to calm her.

Afterwards, "we think through the calls — what we can do better and what we did well," she said. "Every situation is different; each incident is different. I remind myself everybody's emergency issue is different. For them the key is listening, assessing what's really happening, helping [the caller] process, keep them apprised about what will happen when the first responders arrive. I have at last found my niche. I'm right where I need to be."

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# Everybody knows officer Marty

BY CAROLE ROBINSON  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Franklin Police officer Marty Carson is one of the most well-known officers in the department. He's the kind of officer people thank when he hands them a ticket or arrests them. It's his friendly, upbeat and caring disposition that does it.

A fourth generation Williamson Countian, Carson grew up in the rural Boston area of the county. He got his first taste of law enforcement as a student at Franklin High after the Franklin Police Department started an Explorer program. Carson was one of the first to join and enjoyed the experience.

After he graduated in 1988 he went off to Austin Peay University where he majored in geology.

"When I finished college I stayed

in Clarksville, but I was having a hard time finding a job," he said. "My aunt worked for the city [of Franklin] in Building Neighborhood Services. She suggested I come back and try the police department."

There were 24 applicants, and he was offered the job.

"Jackie Moore hired me," Carson said. "I love this job — I'm drawn to it. I was drawn to it from an early age; I guess I forgot."

Initial training was eight weeks at the Tennessee Law Enforcement Training Academy, then another 10 weeks of "in house" training.

With training over, Carson was assigned to the patrol unit working the midnight shift, known to officers as the arresting shift.

Carson has worked in all zones, but he started in and has spent the most time in Zone 1 — the old part of

Franklin.

"The greatest thing about patrol on or off duty, downtown or at the parks, is seeing people out not giving a second thought to safety," Carson said. "I'm proud they don't have to be concerned; that's our job. We handle [the bad] and move on and continue to maintain the quality of life we have here. Chief [Deborah] Faulkner wants it that people don't have to think about [safety]."

A people person, patrol allows him to meet and talk with people. Walking around old Franklin meeting and talking with people is a true joy.

Although vehicle patrol includes traffic enforcement and crashes, it's also cruising through neighborhoods where he gets a chance to learn the neighborhoods and meet the residents.

One day he drove by a yard sale



MARTY CARSON

in Fieldstone Farms where he saw a lady having a yard sale. He stopped, introduced himself began to talk

>>>CARSON, Continued on Page 11

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# Carson

Continued from Page 10

with her and learned she lived alone. He stopped by again the next day and gave her his card, should she ever need help.

"I've been here so long and I've tried to earn a good reputation as being kind and fair, even while making an arrest," he said. "People know I'm going to be fair. I help them see and understand they messed up. They know and have to figure it out, take it as learning a lesson."

Carson recalled the day Chief Moore called him into a meeting to tell him about a lady he arrested. Weeks after the arrest she called the office to let him know how nice I was while arresting her. Men and women in law enforcement see things across the board — people at their lowest and highest.

"You never know what you're get-

ting; every day is different and you never know," he said. "We see some things no person should see."

Carson said he meets people where they are. Before that traffic stop the person may have had a bad day. It could have been at work, or family issues, a death, bad news of some kind.

"You have to meet them where they are."

There are times law enforcers know there will be trouble, but they go forward anyway. They can also predict when trouble will escalate.

"There's always a bump in domestics during the holidays and the full moon — for some reason some people lose their minds," he said.

For a while Det. Craig Wright was Carson's partner on midnights. Carson related an event when a young man on Natchez Street pulled a knife and was threatening people. They had Tasers, but they were brand new to the department; so brand new they were on the first shift as-



Franklin Police Officer Marty Carson.

CAROLE ROBINSON

signed to carry Tasers, but the Tasers were still in their suitcases when they arrived. They got a Taser but it had little affect on the man but it did cause him to drop the knife. The officers took quick advantage and arrested him.

"It was a close call," he said.

Carson's biggest life influencers were his mother and grandmother. Mom instilled the importance of integrity and treating people fair; Grandma taught him to have fun and not to talk down to anyone, especially law enforcement.

Another influencer was the late FPD Capt. Will Coffee.

"When I grew older I had interactions with Capt. Will Coffee," he said. "I enjoyed being with him and learned a lot. He drove an old gold Impala and had great character."

Mental health problems are always a challenge, but it's where community policing really shows its colors. When Carson answered a call on Short Court he didn't know what he'd find. A mother was having trouble with her adult son who had become violent.

"I knew him through high school — he was off his meds," Carson said.

He ended up Tasing the man and taking him to the hospital rather than arresting him, which would have meant going to jail and the bail process rather than getting help.

By taking him to the hospital, Carson was able to get the man into a Mental Health Court with a two-year probation program under the care of a physician who got him back on his meds and helped him stay on them.

"There hasn't been an incident since," said Carson.

Mental health is a part of community policing, which has a variety of forms.

One day Carson saw a man with a death wish walking in the middle of Downs Boulevard. He got out of his car and walked up to him.

"He recognized me so I grabbed him and got him off the road," Carson said. "I was able to get an ambulance and help."

Like many families, his family was afraid interaction with the police meant he'd go to jail. They discovered that's not always the case.

"This is what the chief wants us to do; know the community and know the people," he said. "If people are comfortable with us they'll tell us when things go bad."

One night a local drunk and thief stole something from a couple boys. They approached him, beat him up and left him in a ditch. Carson got the call, found him and rushed him to the hospital. He was fixed up and went to his sister's house to heal. The next day Carson stopped by his sister's house to get a statement, took one look at his gray face and told him to get back to the hospital.

Turned out his spleen was ruptured. The man died a few hours later.

"I took that guy to jail more times than I could count, but he didn't deserve to die," Carson said and added they found the boys and got a conviction on all of them.

When you see officer Marty Carson around town, say hey and ask for a story — he's got plenty.



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# Public service part of a Brentwood firefighter's DNA

BY CAROLE ROBINSON  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Brentwood Fire & Rescue engineer Chris Revell's family has a long history of public service. His entire family is in law enforcement, except an uncle, who became a firefighter.

"My dad was chief of police in Tallahassee for 27 years," Revell said. "Firefighter wasn't on my radar, but the service aspect was."

It just took a while before Revell gave in to the family tradition.

In college Revell majored in economics and played football at Florida State all four years. After graduation he continued with his Florida State team for two years as a graduate assistant coach before accepting a coaching position. His coaching career ended three years later when he took a job in wealth

management. Another three years later, Revell's church asked him and his wife, who he met in college, to plant a church in California.

"That didn't pay a lot so I had to figure out how to supplement on the side," he said.

A gentleman in his church had been a Los Angeles Fire Department firefighter for 30 years. He told Revell how difficult it was; it would take five to six years to get hired. Not deterred, Revell studied for his Basic EMT certification.

"In California, you almost have to be a paramedic to get hired," he said. "I looked into testing (to be a paramedic), but we were unsure about raising a family [in California]."

The church was planted and growing, so Revell and his wife be-



Brentwood Fire Fighter/EMT Chris Revell.

CAROLE ROBINSON

>>>REVELL, Continued on Page 13



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Maury County Fire & Rescue



Bill Fitzgerald  
Franklin Fire Department  
Retired 25½ years



Mike Woodall  
Volunteer firefighter  
Williamson Co. Fire & Rescue

# Revell

Continued from Page 12

gan looking around the country for a place to make a life.

“My wife was in media communications, but there wasn’t a lot of television opportunities in LA.,” he said. “A Nashville station hired her.”

They moved to Middle Tennessee, and Revell’s DNA took over when he applied at the Brentwood Fire Department. He was hired on July 14, 2021, and is currently in paramedic school preparing to finish in mid-August.

“Brentwood is a phenomenal place to work,” he said. “The city takes care of us, the people are awesome and the department hires good people. When I come to work, it’s almost not work, but a place to hang out with friends. The people here are almost like family.”

“We experience a lot together —

crazy situations — and we’re there for each other in the really hard situations,” Revell added.

With firefighters now doing more than fighting fires, training has expanded to many areas from extrication to ropes, swift water and medical. There are more medical calls than fire — partly due to higher building standards, and many firefighters add EMS and paramedic to their resume.

“Fire service in general is 60 to 65 percent medical calls,” Revell said. “Brentwood prides itself with its ALS (Advance Life Support) care.”

Since there are often needs for medical care during fires, a paramedic is on almost every truck that leaves a station “and the level of care is much higher,” Revell said.

The most common medical calls are for nose bleeds, shortness of breath and cardiac arrest, but there’s always something different that comes along.

This year lightning strikes dur-

ing April and May kept area fire departments unusually busy, he said. The lightning mostly hit attics, but depending on the building, fire can move fast.

Car fires on the interstates and back roads have also increased. Everything burns faster now, he said. I-beams used to be solid, now they’re made with particle board so response time is critical.

“We have a lot of larger houses here in Brentwood,” Revell said. “Codes require sprinklers in every room. People didn’t like to put them in. If there was a fire in one area, all the sprinklers went off and caused more damage than the fire.”

Sprinkler systems have improved — each sprinkler has its own sensor so not all go off. The improvement makes their installation more acceptable.

“We are taught building construction — how to look at a house and know the inside instead of going into rooms expecting one thing and

it’s different,” he said. “With smoke we can’t see, now we know what to expect. In a house we want to be cognizant of what it has and what to expect - fire doubles in size every 60 seconds — we have to move fast.”

Along with fires and medical training, Brentwood firefighters train for vehicle extrication, ropes, swift water and so much more. No two days are alike — each day is truly a new beginning and they work to be prepared for whatever is tossed their way.

“We prepare for every situation, but surprises happen,” Revell said. “People know when we do respond, the tactics and skills we have are the best of the best in fire and medical.”

Revell learned from his father and growing up surrounded by a public safety family, to strive to be the first responder he’d want responding to his daughter. That thought inspires him to strive to always provide the best possible care on every call, whether it be medical or a fire.



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# WCRS Lt. Mark Teets sees a need and finds a calling

BY CAROLE ROBINSON  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Four years ago, before he was challenged by his sister, Savannah, Williamson County Rescue Squad Lt. Mark Teets “flirted with the idea” of joining an area fire service. Then Savannah challenged him; if she joined, would he join? His decision was made, and brother and sister joined the Williamson County Rescue Squad together. They attended 10 months of fire and rescue training for Firefighter I, Hazmat Awareness and Emergency Medical Response.

“It was awesome going through training together,” said Teets, who is attached to Station 23 in Thompson’s Station. Savannah is at Station 12 on Carothers Parkway.

Teets went on to train on technical rope rescue, speed humps used as traffic calming devices during

a fire and he earned his engineer certification, but he said he learned the most by going on calls and following the experienced firefighters.

The director of IT and finance for Mediant International Staffing headquartered in Brentwood, Teets worked remote from home until he joined the WCFR. Almost all Williamson County fire stations now have accommodations for live-in fire fighters. Teets volunteered to be one of Station 23’s live-ins and set up his remote office at Station 23 where he covers day shift calls.

In August 2022 Teets discovered a new niche for the Williamson County Rescue Squad to adopt.

Recently there had been at least five or six incidents of animals getting in precarious positions and in need of rescue, many of them large



CAROLE ROBINSON

WCRS Lt. Mark Teets stand by the Williamson County Rescue Squad Truck 23, which has been rehabilitated into a large animal rescue vehicle.

>>>TEETS, Continued on Page 15

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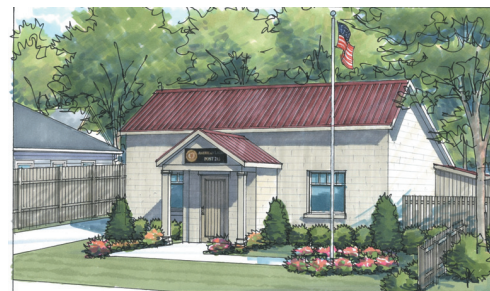
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## Teets

Continued from Page 14

animals. The incident that finally “kicked off the desire to address the issue more directly” was a blind/visually impaired old horse who fell into a swimming pool in Station 22’s district in the Sneed Road area.

According to Teets, “It was such a unique call and presented very unique challenges.”

When the Rescue team arrived, veterinarians from Tennessee Equine Hospital and staff from Animal Control who were also there to assist them and check Tonto, the horse, after the rescue. Tonto was struggling to stand in the pool — his hooves kept sliding on the pool’s incline and couldn’t get the traction he needed to get to the pool’s stairs.

Several of the fire and rescue

team went into the water with their water rescue gear. Using ropes, extrication bags, wood cribbing, a large hose line and a lot of manpower, they carefully managed, with “great difficulty,” to pull Tonto out of the water. Fortunately, he only had minor injuries from the rescue.

Afterwards, “we thought we should start doing something” about the issue of large animal rescues, Teets said. “Nobody has a dedicated team in Middle Tennessee. The nearest is as far as 150 miles away. The fire department gets the calls and we work with Animal Control, but they can’t handle anything larger than a goat.”

WCRS Chief Galoppi, who works for MARS, was very supportive of the idea.

“He has a soft spot for animals,” Teets said. “He gave the creation of the team his full support and department backing.”

Galoppi was a part of Tonto’s rescue and fully understood the need. Teets and Lt. Michelle Strange from stations 30 and 21 went to Georgia for a five-day Animal Rescue training. When they returned they put out an all call for volunteers, built up and trained the WCRS Animal Rescue Team. Teets and Strange provided training to stations across the county.

“Michelle and I teach rescue limits and what can be done on the scene,” Teets said.

Teets also got a grant from the state that helped to fund specialized rescue equipment such as protection lifters, spreader bars, a rescue glide, straps for water rescue, a sling, a suction breaker to break the suction around hooves, a float to get an animal out of water and more. He found gold with an old rescue truck that was ready to be retired and transformed it into the WCRS Animal Rescue Truck, which now carries the equipment.

Since the Animal Rescue Team has been created, they’ve been on several more rescues including two mutual aid calls from Maury County.

“One was a horse that got stuck in a gully and couldn’t get up,” Teets said.

They used a sling that holds up to 25,000 pounds to pick up the large animal.

Another rescue was a dog caught in a sewer drain.

Then there was the bull that got loose on I-840 when its trailer disconnected from the truck hauling it.

“The lady was taking him to the slaughter house when the incident occurred,” Teet said.

Seems she put a two-inch trailer hitch onto a 1-1/2-inch ball. She hit a bump on the road that disconnected the trailer from the truck and the bull from the trailer.

“We chased the bull and were able to corral it,” Teets said. “The Sheriff’s Department has a cowboy on call — he came with his horse and dogs and we were able to corral the bull.”

After his last hurrah, the bull was returned to the trailer, which was better secured.

“We’ve got people who allow us to use their animals to train,” Teets said.

They’ve been training with pigs, llamas, alpacas, horses, mules and goats.

“Even herding; it’s a simple concept, but there’s a way to do it,” he said.

Another Maury County call was for a calf stuck in mud. The farmer had done all he could to get it out so he called the Maury County Fire Department who called the WCRS. It was cold so when they pulled the calf out it was rushed to the barn where it was given saline that had been put in the chief’s car with the heater running to warm up.

“I came here for work nine years ago and I found a calling,” Teets said. “This is for me. I love it here. I love being a volunteer and the caliber of people are unlike anyone I’ve known. We all work hard, joke, tell stories and hang out together.”



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# Dominic Thiessen is hooked on firefighting

BY CAROLE ROBINSON  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

After joining Fire Explorers in Franklin during high school, Fairview firefighter Dominic Thiessen was hooked.

“I instantly fell in love with it,” he said. “The camaraderie, station life, helping people — I love everything about it.”

A homeschool high school graduate, Thiessen enrolled in Columbia

State’s Basic and Advanced EMT program. After earning his certifications he went looking for a job.

“I heard Fairview was hiring,” he said.

He made an appointment for an interview. The day after the interview he got a call from Fairview Chief Scott Hughes, telling him he was hired. Thiessen said he was “surprised, and very glad.”

Thiessen enrolled in the 10-week

training at TFACA Fire Academy located in Bell Buckle.

“We did Fire I, Hazmat awareness, operations — we covered everything needed to test for Fire 2,” he said.

Thiessen also became familiar with the various trucks used in firefighting and the equipment they carry.

He was officially a firefighter by August 2024.

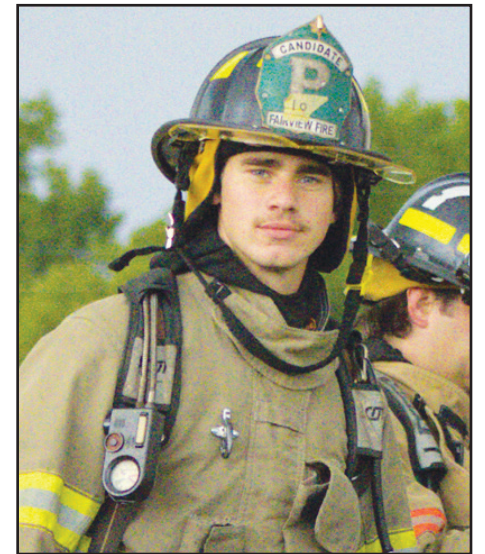
“For a while I went on calls mostly as a ‘go-for’ until I was totally familiarized with everything,” he said. As an EMT, “I could help with medicals, but I couldn’t do extrications.”

The first two weeks he was on day shift getting acquainted with the protocols and routines of the department.

During his first or second shift, a call came in — it involved an extrication. A car hit a tree and flipped over into a ditch. It was laying on its side and the driver was unconscious but



CAROLE ROBINSON  
Fairview Fire Fighter/EMT Dominic Thiessen will celebrate his first year as a fire fighter.



SUBMITTED  
Fairview Fire Fighter EMT Dominic Thiessen picking up after a fire call.

breathing.

“We had to cut the roof off to get to him,” he said. “They threw me right in it. That was my first real adrenaline high.”

Once the roof was off, firefighters extricated the man and quickly got him into the ambulance.

In September Thiessen moved to B Shift. His first day they were called to a brush fire. The tractor that caused it was heading to a pond to put the fire out but was leaving a trail of fire behind it. The fire was spreading fast. It had been very dry and a number of round hay bales in the field also caught fire. A call went out to Williamson County Fire & Rescue for additional equipment. Four or five acres were burning quickly. Along with the fire truck, WCFR brought a brush truck and tanker.

“I went with the captain in the brush truck around the perimeter of the field,” he said.

Thiessen hung out the window hosing the fire along the perimeter.

“It was my first fire,” he said.

Another memorable incident he was involved with was a collision on the interstate.

“The car was pretty banged up,” he said.

The driver was the only person in the car and the dash board rolled onto him pinning him in the vehicle.

“We had to use special tools to get it off him,” Thiessen said. “I saw it from

his perspective as he was struggling to get out. I had to calm him — he was panicking and I had to calm him.”

The event taught Thiessen how to stay focused on being calm so he could focus on helping the man. He did so by reminding himself they had the tools to get him out, the people to use them and an ambulance with people to take care of him.

“I knew he’d be OK — I had to convince him he’d be OK,” he said.

Thiessen is now a full-fledged firefighter who loves his career choice. He continues to work on being a better firefighter and looks forward to growing with the department. He learns from the experiences of others, refines as his tasks and continually trains.

And ... “I get to hang out with guys who are practically family and I get to help people,” he said.

“It’s all I hoped it would be and 100 percent more,” he said. “I have a great group of guys on my shift — we clicked right away and work real well together.”

Shifts are 48 hours on and 96 hours off.

“Sometimes we have long days but then we have four days off to recover,” he said “I’m getting into the groove of having time off to hang with my family.”

Thiessen’s family just grew on June 5 when he was married.

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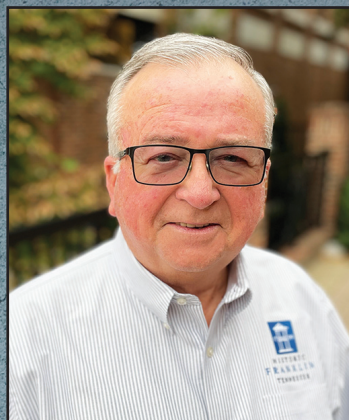
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# Brian Skok has had 'real good saves' as a paramedic

BY CAROLE ROBINSON  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

When a medical emergency call is dispatched, the first responders are likely to be men and women with Williamson Health's EMS ambulance service. Ambulances and medics are staffed at almost every manned Williamson County Fire & Rescue station. One of those responders is Brian Skok, an Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic.

Skok always wanted to be a doctor, but it wasn't in the stars for him. He attended Mississippi State University and graduated in 2004 with a communications and journalism degree — about the time when many newspapers were going by way of the dinosaurs.

"I put my resume out on monster.com," Skok said.

He found himself in the restaurant business at Ryan's Steak House as the general manager. After five years he went to Dominos and then Arby's. He was the GM at each one. During that time ObamaCare went into effect, he said. Most restaurants weren't making enough to provide health care insurance so they cut back employee hours to 30.

"It got hard to hire people," he said. "I talked with my mom and she reminded me that I always wanted to be a doctor to help people."

While medical school was out of the question, Skok had another idea. It took time, but in 2015 Skok earned his Basic EMT and then Paramedic certifications.

"Being a paramedic is almost like being a doctor," he said. Over the last seven years, "we've had some real good saves."

Skok married a nurse in 2010 and they have two children. Their youngest, Grayson, is autistic. When he gets rattled they use gadgets — small rubber toys he can fidget with and calm himself.

Some children and adults on the spectrum are nonverbal or have difficulty communicating. That impacts interactions between first responders



CAROLE ROBINSON  
Williamson Health EMS Brian Skok created a communications board for adults and children unable to communicate verbally during a medical emergency.

and the patients they're transporting as they work out where they may hurt, how they feel and personal information such as name and allergies.

Skok, whose son is verbal but understood well the challenges, designed a nonverbal communications board. It's a simple but very handy "lifeline" for those individuals at a critical time. It allows them to communicate vital information and "help us understand their needs quickly and accurately, reduce anxiety and improve patient care," wrote Skok for a Williamson Health newsletter.

The communications board has an array of clear images that are concise and universally recognized. Patients can point to and relate "crucial information to paramedics."

Skok also made calming boxes just like Grayson's for the ambulances to calm frightened children whether or not they're on the spectrum.

"We have one at home and in each of our vehicles in case [Grayson] needs to calm down," Skok said.

Every Williamson Health ambulance, more than 20, are equipped with a communications board and a calming box resulting in quicker, more accurate care and reduced anxiety while en route to the hospital.



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# Sgt. Jamey Meadows is 'living a dream'

BY CAROLE ROBINSON  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Service is a tradition within Fairview Police Sgt. Jamey Meadows' large family. He grew up listening to the stories family members told about their service in all the military branches. By the time Meadows reached his early teens he knew he was going to maintain the tradition; he just didn't know which direction he wanted to go — military or law enforcement.

Then, 15 years ago an opportunity popped up and his direction was set. Hickman County was hiring correction officers and Meadows jumped on what he considered an opening in an opportunity. Since that time he's been a bailiff for several judges, a patrol officer and now he's a sergeant.

"It's been fulfilling and quite an experience getting the different as-

pects of law enforcement," he said.

His first almost five years were filled with an array of experiences. Eight months in Hickman County corrections was one side. Then he served as a bailiff in the Dickson County court system. During that time he saw another side of the law as a reserve officer in his hometown of Fairview. Experiencing several realms of the law, in 2016 Meadows applied and was hired as a patrol officer with the Fairview Police Department.

"I'm a life time resident of Fairview," he said. "I grew up here, went to school here, and I've always lived here."

He admitted he's had challenges, "but for the most part, it's been very rewarding being in public service."

In a growing small town, Meadows still has a personal relationship with City Hall and the town's residents. He finds he can't walk

anywhere without running into someone he's known all his life or someone he's helped in the past.

"It's very rewarding to be in your own community because so many trust me and I can steer them in the correct direction," he said. "But it can be comical dealing with people you've known all your life."

The downside to situations with familiar people is seeing "friends" on their worst days. As an officer, the best he can do is help them look at him as a friendly police officer and not a friend.

"Sometimes someone will try to exploit the fact we know each other, but I don't fall for it," Meadows said.

He simply explains it's his job to apply the law to everyone and his philosophy is to apply compassion as well as the law to everyone.

With two Interstates bounding



CAROLE ROBINSON  
Fairview Police Sgt. Jamey Meadows.

>>>MEADOWS, Continued on Page 21

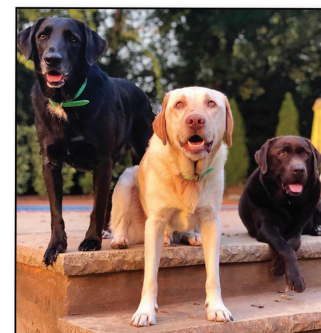


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# Meadows

Continued from Page 20

two sides of Fairview, first responders see “horrific accidents.”

“They’re something we never fully forget,” he said. “Even natural causes we’re seeing people at their absolute worst moment — people you know.”

Some of the worst calls involve children; abuse or injury really takes a toll over time. It’s difficult to see and hear and you don’t forget the sounds, smells — they stick with you, he said.

“The average person only sees three to four traumas in their life. First responders see three to four in a week,” he added.

Meadows uses physical activities and an ability to separate work life from personal life to maintain a positive perspective.

Not every call is crime-related. They can simply be a call to unlock a car door or jump-start a vehicle.

“I had a call not long ago about a lady having labor pains,” he added.

She was driving herself to the hospital and ran off the road. Meadows was relieved when the EMTs arrived and took care of helping her and the baby who was going to be born right there.

Sometimes the call is from a frustrated parent who needs another resource to sort out a situation or to speak to their child on a personal level.

Meadows said when he gets a chance to talk to kids, he stresses the dangers of fentanyl, opioids, pill mills and other drugs, as well as alcohol.

“It’s really getting dangerous,” he said. “When parents find [bad] things [like drugs or paraphernalia] in their kids’ room I instruct them to call the police because fentanyl can be involved and it can penetrate the skin.”

It doesn’t matter if it’s low income, middle or upper middle income families, drugs are affecting the community. They know no geographical restraints, Meadows said. He advises parents to stay involved in their children’s activities and be aware of their behavior, their friends and others they’re hanging with. Vaping is in the middle school



SUBMITTED  
Fairview Police Sgt. Jamey Meadows collects stuffed animals for under privileged children in the community.

and there are dangers and consequences with that, too, he added.

“Life is 360, now,” Meadows said. “With phones, social media, apps — something posted is there forever and kids make poor decisions.”

Meadows also works well with the school resource officers. If they have issues with a particular student, “they know they can reach out to me personally,” he said.

Meadows enjoys the personal relationships he’s developed with other officers, coworkers and in the community.

“When I first got into this career, Fairview was where I wanted to be,” he said. “With family here, I have a vested interest in the community and I have my forever work home. It’s very fulfilling.”

Anywhere he goes, there’s just no run in and run out. When he goes to the store it’s going to be a while.

“A five-minute trip is always a 40-minute trip,” he said. “Most people have my home phone. When I get calls I answer and direct them to where they need to go.”

“Fairview is a great community to live in and to work in,” Meadows said. “I feel like I’m living a dream. It’s been a blessing working here.”

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# Capt. Adam Wyngaard was born to be a firefighter

BY CAROLE ROBINSON  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

With a father and an uncle as firefighters, Nolensville Fire Department Capt. Adam Wyngaard knew the life of a fireman well, loved it and knew that's what he was going to do one day. He spent hours at the fire station watching his dad, the chief and uncle the assistant chief. He listened, fascinated with their stories and the stories other firefighters told. Most importantly, he watched and learned from them.

"I graduated early from high school so the high school paid for the first semester towards my associates degree," Wyngaard said.

He has always been eager to step up to a challenge and learn. He earned his Associates degree at Fox Valley Technical college in Appleton, Wisconsin. He went on to earn a Bachelor's degree in Fire Administration at Columbia Southern, an online college based in Alabama. Now he's currently considering going for a Masters degree in Public Administration and organizational leadership.

"It's a one-year intense program at Lipscomb," he said. "My biggest struggle is the new technology."

And busy children.

When he turned 18 Wyngaard began volunteering at the fire station, joining the firefighters he admired and watched for years. They guided, advised and helped with his early training.

"When I started [at the fire department] there was no EMS. The fire department responded to Hazmat, fires and calls to shut off an overflowing toilet."

Now between 70% to 80% percent of the call volume is medical, he added.

In 2008 Wyngaard married and decided to spread his wings. He applied to and was hired on as a full-time firefighter in Decatur, Illinois.

"We had a lot of structure fires, and technical rescues," he said. "It was a rural area, the homes were

small and there was a lot of low-income poverty."

During his tenure in Illinois Wyngaard earned his EMT certification.

In early 2014 he and his wife decided to move from Illinois to either choose Texas or Tennessee — he applied to fire stations in both. Firefighter Adam Wyngaard joined the Brentwood Fire Department in August 2014. The move to Tennessee was a big change for the Wyngaards.

"I went from wiping my shoes after I left a house to wiping them before going into a house," he said.

In Illinois they had more than 20 calls a day and one truck. When he moved to Brentwood the pace was much slower with four to five calls on a busy day.

"The community is different, and how I love it," he said. "The community of Williamson County is involved, appreciative — they even love their cops! They have an appreciation of emergency services as a hole."

Wyngaard recalled the man who made a trip to the station, "to say hello and thank you." His call was a cardiac arrest that caused a car wreck.

"This is what keeps us going, to see a positive outcome," Wyngaard said, "We get fewer of those than bad calls, so to know we did well keeps us going."

During his years with the Brentwood Fire Department Wyngaard earned his Advanced EMT. He also began using one of his days off to volunteer at the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt.

In 2020 the Nolensville Fire Department began its transition from the Williamson County Rescue Squad all volunteer fire service to a paid fire service and department of the city of Nolensville. Since Brentwood and Nolensville were close in proximity, Brentwood often assisted the NPD Volunteer Fire Department with calls. Wyngaard was very familiar with the chiefs and firefighters. The thought of being a part of the transition was a chal-



SUBMITTED  
Nolensville Fire Department Capt. Adam Wyngaard in Washington DC for a conference visits the Capitol.

lenge that piqued his interest.

Nolensville Assistant Chief Matthew Lupo was working on the administrative part of the transition — policies and procedures in March 2021 when Wyngaard decided to apply to move from Brentwood Fire & Rescue to Nolensville Fire & Rescue and be a part of helping with the transition.

"I wasn't planning to leave Brentwood," he said. "But the opportunity to work with Chief [David] Windrow with then Assistant Chief Lupo (now Chief) — it was like I didn't leave. Not many people get the opportunity to start from the bottom up [in an organization]. It was the opportunity of a lifetime. You miss



SUBMITTED  
Nolensville Fire Department Capt. Adam Wyngaard during enters a smokey room during a training session.

100 percent of the time, what you don't try."

He brought experiences, an eagerness to succeed and a desire to be a part of growing Nolensville Fire & Rescue to meet the needs of a growing community.

"I want to be that calmness when people have a bad day," he said. "This is the best job in the world. I feel like I was born to do what I'm doing — I've been around it all my life."

In 2024 Wyngaard was named the NFD Fire Fighter of the Year by Chief Lupo.

"Adam Wyngaard is our longest tenured captain and he runs A Shift," Chief Lupo wrote in a note. "He is our main field instructor for life safety and fire code inspections. He is our first child safety seat technician, as well. He just completed his bachelor's degree, has many fire department certifications through the state, is an Advanced EMT and has done a lot for the fire department to help us develop and be where we are."

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# Lt. Jim Hickman returns to where he started

BY CAROLE ROBINSON  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Williamson County Sheriff Deputy Lt. Jim Hickman began his law enforcement career with the Sheriff's department in 1992 under Sheriff Lance Saylor. He was fresh out of four years in the Marine Corps Military Police unit and served in Desert Storm. And in need of a job. He joined the Marine Corps a few months after he graduated from Forrest High School in Chapel Hill.

"I wanted structure and at 19 the military provided it," he said. "I wasn't a good student in high school and I had no interest in going to college."

Hickman considered law enforcement but he wasn't old enough; minimum age requirement was 21.

He was born in the old Williamson County Hospital, which now serves residents as the county's Administra-

tive Complex, and raised in Williamson County. While searching for a career that fit, Hickman tried a number of odd jobs but nothing clicked. Restlessness led him to the Marine Corps. After basic training at Paris Island he was sent to military police training. Young Hickman found his niche.

"The military helped with self confidence," he said. "Earlier, I could do stuff, but I was just putting in the time. I wouldn't be here if not for the military. It gave me direction and the purpose I was lacking."

When Hickman was discharged in 1992 he had a set of skills and a direction. Back home he settled in and began to put all he learned to good use. His father helped by talking to Lt. Phil Lovell at the Sheriff's office. Lovell talked with Dusty Rhoades, who became sheriff years later. "He took a chance with me and in 1993 put me in the field training program," he said. "David Beard was my supervisor. I

worked nights. It was fun and exciting."

By 1998 he was married and children were on the horizon. That year he made some big life changes. The first, he left the Williamson County Sheriff's Office for a job with the Metro Nashville Police Department. A few months later a friend talked Hickman into joining the Army National Guard. He was assigned to the Military Police Division.

Nine years later in 2007 Hickman moved to the Army Reserves. He said there were more opportunities to travel and chances to move up in command.

"The Reserves offer opportunities to go places and do things," he said. "I don't think, if I hadn't joined the Reserves, I would be a Command Sergeant Major. There are more opportunities and advancement [in the Reserves]."

>>>HICKMAN, Continued on Page 25



SUBMITTED

Welcome Home WCSO Lt. Jim Hickman. He began his career in service with the WCSO, then joined the military and other law enforcement agencies before returning to the WCSO.

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# Hickman

Continued from Page 24

In the Reserves, he traveled throughout the country to areas stricken by natural disasters. He also worked security details during the 2020 protests, bombings and tornadoes.

“As you go up in rank, from E8 to 1st Sergeant to Sergeant Major of a regional support group, you also support Department of Defense missions,” he said.

Meanwhile, Hickman was also making his way up the chain in his professional career with the MNPD. At the precinct level he made Detective Sergeant in the Investigative Division specializing in narcotics interdiction, gangs, gambling and prostitution. He worked on a two-year project with the ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives). The work resulted in catching 19 people who all pled guilty rather than go to trial.

He also spent time as an instructor in officer survival, defense tactics, firearms and driving at the Tennessee

Law Enforcement Training Academy.

“I trained 20 classes between about 2013 and 2020,” he said. “It was neat to see the level of enthusiasm and pride in the recruits. It was a rewarding time at the Academy.”

In 2022 Sgt. Hickman retired from MNPD after 24 years of service.

During his time with the ATF in a support position, he ran into Williamson County Sheriff Jeff Hughes. They knew each other from working together years before. Soon after the meet-up Hickman got a call from Hughes.

“He called to offer me a job I wasn’t looking for,” Hickman said. “In September 2024 he pulled me back in to be a Field Training Coordinator.

“I’ve come full circle from where I started,” he said. “I had a lot of good leaders and mentors. I feel like if it wasn’t for some of them, I wouldn’t be where I am.”

Hickman also credits his supportive wife of almost 30 years and their three children who have kept him balanced.



**We are surrounded by heroes!**

**The Williamson County Republican Party appreciates your service to our community.**

Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.  
- Galatians 6:2

# Being a police officer: Matt Neal

BY CAROLE ROBINSON  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

When Nolensville Police Lt. Matt Neal and his twin brother, Kyle, graduated from high school, there was no question as to the career path they were headed. It was something they both planned since they were very young; they just had to wait a few more years.

In Ohio the minimum age for entry into the police academy is 21. That didn't deter the brothers. Matt Neal found a job with a private security company. He had a plan and the experiences and lessons working with a PI would be helpful when he finally reached his dream job.

As soon as the brothers turned 21, they were off to the Police Academy, with jobs waiting at the Dayton, Ohio, Police Department when they graduated.

As a sports enthusiast throughout his youth, Matt played football and baseball where he learned the value of teamwork and sharing the pride of a job well done. He applies those same values to his career in law enforcement.

"I like the idea of working as a team," he said.

Matt worked with the Dayton Police Department for nine years.

"I had no intention of moving," he said, but his brother did. He had five years of service when he left Dayton for the Nashville Police Department. Kyle regularly visited Music City and decided to make it

home. He found a new job in law enforcement with the Nolensville Police Department and waited for his brother to join him. It took a while.

"I came down in 2022 and had a ride-along with Chief Roddy Parker," Matt said.

He immediately understood why his brother loved the area and his job. He accepted Parker's offer of employment without hesitation. The Neal brothers were together again as patrol officers — on different shifts and rotations.

"I've loved it here ever since that ride," Matt said. "We have some of the best cops I've ever worked with."

The brothers both made sergeant — two months apart. Matt after seven months and Kyle within nine months.

As the A Shift supervisor, Matt puts a lot of trust in his officers.

"I've always viewed police officers as people with integrity," Neal said. "They're respectable, important to a community. We do community policing here — meeting and talking with people. Here citizens love us — they support us. It's not the same in Ohio."

To Lt. Neal, Nolensville is unique and he plans to keep it unique. The department supports its officers from the top down. New officers are trained before being sent out on their own. They're introduced to the area, the character of the city and its residents, and where to find resources when needed.



Nolensville Police Sgt. Neal

CAROLE ROBINSON

"As a shift supervisor, I advise and make decisions," he said. "The call load is different here."

Generally the NPD deals with simple problems: vehicle unlocks and burglaries.

They're a daily problem, but a lot of times it's a deer or other non-human setting off alarms. There's also the cows in the road, speeders, traffic issues and complaints.

A call about two horses on a resident's front lawn was a challenge for the city boy from Ohio.

"I don't know anything about horses except to not get behind them," Matt said.

An hour later he was feeding them carrots.

"We were able to find the [horses'] owner," he said. "We checked the farms in the area. It's so different here. We still get calls I never had [in Ohio]. I have to be able to figure things out and be calm."

Another call about a noise in a garage, Matt responded with Taser in hand, just in case. It was a raccoon. He called the Fire Department to take care of that one, and the call about a water heater making a "racket."

Nolensville's proximity to Davidson County adds some pressures Lt. Neal is more accustomed to after nine years in a large city.

"The NPD works hard to keep their city safe," he said. "We keep [Davidson County] stuff out of here and we make it known we don't tolerate what they want to bring across the border. We watch the Davidson County line and we know the people in the area."

Looking toward the future, Lt. Neal is currently working on his bachelor's degree in business management.

"I want to keep learning," he said. "My job is fun and I love to be out with the public. People here are friendly — the citizens keep me here. I'm trying to get better at public speaking."

Neal continues to seek new ways to learn and expand. In August, he'll be attending the FBI's LEEDA program, a law enforcement leadership program.

"I'd like to continue to build on [retired] Chief Parker and [current] Chief Armour's legacies," he said.

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# Marshall discovers her passion

BY CAROLE ROBINSON  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Williamson County Fire & Rescue EMT Deb Marshall is a combination Energizer bunny, Road Runner, Florence Nightingale and Super hero. A continual learner, she meshes education and life experiences to solve problems and help others.

Born and raised in England, Marshall was driven to learn and make a difference. In 1979 she used her bachelor's degree in engineering at Michelin Tires. In 1985, after a six-year apprenticeship in engineering, the company offered her an apprenticeship in the Informational Technology (IT) department at a time when careers in computers were changing the way businesses were doing business.

"There were only two of us," she said. "I learned programming and

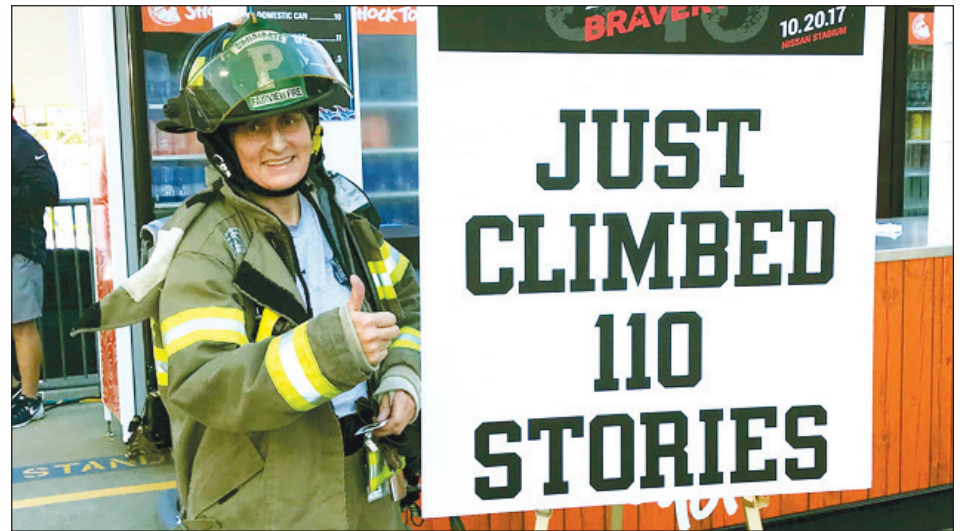
loved it. I learned program hydraulic numatics."

Her success in the IT program at Michelin landed her a job with JCB Excavators, a multinational manufacturer of heavy construction equipment in Rocester, Staffordshire, England. Soon after, Marshall went out on her own as an IT freelancer.

"By the mid-1990s Europe was in a slump and IT jobs began to dry up," Marshall said.

She was 31 in 1994 when Deloitte, an international professional services company based in London with a firm in Tennessee, captured her attention. They offered her a 12-month contract in IT accounting in Tennessee and arranged for the Green Card. "I never looked back," she said. The 12-month job became a 40-year career.

On Sept. 11, 2001, Marshall's life took another turn.



CAROLE ROBINSON

WC Fire & Rescue Fire Fighter/EMT completes a challenge.

"Deloitte was in Tennessee but it had offices on the 32nd floor of the Twin Towers in 1993 when the first bomb went off in the World Trade

Center," Marshall said. After that the company moved their data center to Hermitage, but Marshall

>>>MARSHALL, Continued on Page 29

*To all those who  
have answered  
the call to "serve  
and protect"*

*John 15:13*

Thank you,  
Dr. Dennis S.

Driggers

Williamson County School Board



## Marshall

Continued from Page 28

knew people who remained there and worked with a lady whose twin sister worked on the 99th floor of one of the towers. Her co-workers' loss and the loss of almost 3,000 other people on Sept. 11 hit Marshall hard and she realized she needed a new direction; but it took her a while to figure out what that direction should be.

"I've always been obsessed with fires and fire trucks, but I never did anything about it," Marshall said. "Then the [2016] fires in Gatlinburg hit. I used to have a Time Share there. I couldn't imagine it all going up."

But she still struggled with that new path.

In 2012, after Marshall and her husband had their first child, she took the CPR class and continued on to get CPR certified. Two years later, after the twins were born, the couple left their Joelton home and moved to Fairview for the schools. After meeting Dana at the Fairview Fire Department, her path became clear.

"I thought I would try it out," she said.

Marshall joined the Fairview Fire Department and went to Basic Fire training, then took classes to be EMR certified.

"I knew enough to be dangerous," she said and continued on to Middle Tennessee State University for her EMT license. There she met a number of county volunteer firefighters.

"People in the [Rescue] Squad kept asking me to join," she said. "I finally did in 2019."

She serves the community from Fire Station 35 on Highway 96 in Fairview, just down the road from her house. In 2021 Marshall earned her EMT license and the Advanced EMT license in 2022.

"I love having that feeling like I have more abilities to help people," Marshall said. "Sometimes the ambulance is far away and someone needs help — I know what to do. I love to help people, especially on their worst days. As a kid I hated the sight of blood. Now it's not so bad."

Marshall recalled a Sunday morn-



SUBMITTED  
Williamson County Fire & Rescue Deb  
Marshall Fire Fighter/EMT

ing call regarding an elderly woman who had fallen. Marshall was right behind the ambulance and there to help the woman, who was in agony from dragging herself to the phone.

"It's not unusual for firefighters to ride behind the ambulance when they need an extra hand or someone to assist in the ambulance on the way to the hospital," she said.

Marshall also works part time with Life Care Center, a medical transport company. During a recent transport, a woman stopped breathing and she didn't have a pulse. Marshall used the Lucas Chest Compression machine and got her pulse back.

"Every situation is different," she said. "You never know what will come up. It fills my cup to help people; even simple lift assists. And I get to work with all kinds of people. It's great to see so many young faces coming in."

Fire & Rescue is a big commitment, especially the first year or so, Marshall said. It's tough, but if you like something, you find a way to do it.

"I like to think I'm a good example for kids," she said. "In your 40s, 50s, 60s you can still learn new things. If you have a good work ethic you never stop learning. Being kind to people doesn't cost anything, but it could be the world to someone else."

Besides Fire & Rescue and Life Care, Marshall is a Scout leader for her two sons' Boy Scout troop.

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# Jake Adair lives his childhood dream as a firefighter

BY CAROLE ROBINSON  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

For Spring Hill Fire Department's Engineer of the Year Jake Adair, being a firefighter is all he ever wanted. Adair joined the SHFD on July 28, 2006, assigned to the new Station 3 on Campbell Station Road. At the time, citywide there was only six paid firefighters plus a chief for each shift. Today there are 30 on each shift and the fourth fire station will open soon in the Buckner-Duplex Road area.

Born and raised in Franklin, Adair grew up surrounded by firefighters. His father was a building contractor, but his friends were firefighters. As a young boy Adair listened to stories told by such Williamson County Rescue Squad legends as the Hood twins, Terry and Tim, his Godfather; Todd Horton, current director of Williamson County Emergency Management; and the late Eddie House, who went on to the Franklin Fire Department. The men and the stories of fire and rescue calls they responded to made a big impact on young Adair.

Adair wanted to be just like them, although at one point, in his sophomore year of high school, he thought about becoming an EMT. That thought didn't last long.

In 2001 Adair joined the WCRS at Station 14 in Franklin. He went through firefighter training and worked on EMS First Responder certification at Columbia State Community College because "I had to go to college, anyway." He also worked at Brentwood Parks and Recreation and learned about electrical installation working with his father.

"When I was a kid, Dad worked with John Maher building houses," he said. "He worked with him until 2005 when Dad became a building inspector."

When Adair turned 21 he left home and moved into the WCRS Station 23 fire house in Thompson's Station as a "live-in." Longtime friends James Bennett, Mike Demastis (now a fire marshal) and Jay

Gamble (now a Franklin firefighter) also once lived there.

"It was like a college dorm," he said.

Two years later, in 2006, Adair was delivering air bottles firefighters wear on their back during a fire to the new about to open Spring Hill Fire Station 3. While there, the topic came up regarding the station's need of an electrician to do some system wiring. He told them he learned about electrical wiring while working for his father and proceeded to install the system wiring. Days later he was offered a job with the Spring Hill Fire Department. Adair declined an offer he had from MTEC three days earlier and joined the crew at Spring Hill Fire Department's newly opened Station 3.

"Three of us have been in this station since Day 1," he said. "That'll be 19 years in July."

Along with his electrical experience, Adair brought training and experience with the WCRS and a two-year start on training to drive a fire truck. He also brought a talent for cooking and was later named Cook of the Year.

Being on a 48/96 schedule with a bunch of "man-children" living together "is like going to camp without the beer," Adair said.

Having someone who likes to cook and is good at it makes it easier to get through the regular cycles of little to no sleep for 48 hours. Emergencies aren't scheduled. Those in emergency services have to be on their best at a moment's notice.

Adair sited the time Station 3 caught a cardiac arrest call at the GM UAW Hall on Christmas Eve. They arrived just in time.

"We got him back," he said.

The man and his family received the ultimate Christmas gift.

Adair still gets a little emotional when he thinks of the 9-year old girl who was on her way to the store with other family members to get her father a birthday card. They were at a stop light when a car ran off an embankment and landed



SUBMITTED

Spring Hill Fire Engineer Jake Adair is seen hosing a house that was on fire.

right in her lap.

"The car hit her door and just peeled the car," he said. "There were other family members in the car and it was still in gear and running. The first thing we're trained to do is turn the car off."

Then Adair went to work with the Extricator tool to safely get the child out of her car. Miraculously she was not critically hurt. A man who saw the accident happen told Adair, "there was a guardian angel in that situation." Adair agreed.

"We get people calling about rescuing their cat," said Adair, who is more of a dog lover than a cat lover. Yes, firemen will rescue cats, although most of the time a treed cat will eventually find its way back down the tree, he added. To protect himself from those sharp claws in many other circumstances, Adair uses a pillowcase to catch the kitty.

In his off time Adair runs his lawn service company and spends time with his two children — mostly at ball games. His daughter, a rising high school senior, is on the girls' lacrosse team and his young son plays baseball, football and basketball.

"He loves anything with wheels and a motor," Adair said. "He's also



SUBMITTED

Spring Hill Fire Engineer Jake Adair

an avid outdoorsman."

By the time Adair reached his five-year mark with SHFD, he had been promoted to engineer and took on the role as shift training officer. The new Buckner-Duplex fire house will be opening soon and he's on the list for one of the three captain positions.



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# From analytics to firefighting

BY CAROLE ROBINSON  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Tony Trus is a volunteer firefighter with Williamson County Fire & Rescue at Station 28 on Pey-tonsville Road. Fighting fires was never something he considered until he got an itch to do something different.

Trus was trained to use critical thinking. He was a numbers and applications person with his own analytics company, which allowed him to work from home.

“I didn’t grow up wanting to be a firefighter,” he said. “It was never on my Bingo card.”

Until the day came when he realized he needed a break from analytical thinking and numbers. He needed to do something totally different that entailed a different kind of thinking. The holidays were approaching when his wife, who is in the telecommunications business and also works from home, mentioned Brentwood was hosting a Citizens Fire Academy.

“I thought it would be kind of neat and refreshing to taste something I never experienced,” he said.

Trus applied for the Citizens Fire Academy and was accepted. The Academy started in early 2019 and he was totally hooked.

“From there my eyes were wide open,” he said. “I learned so much about critical hazards in the area and how fire, EMS and police work together. I got the bug.”

He didn’t want more than to learn about firefighting — he wanted to be a firefighter.

However, firefighting involves making quick decisions with the best information available in a short time. Trus wondered if his brain was able to change his way of thinking.

“I mapped everything out, came up with a plan and talked with (then) Assistant Chief David Windrow,” he said. “Rewiring my brain wasn’t easy. It took a while for me.”

Trus dived right into firefighting at the Fire Academy.



Williamson County Fire-Rescue Fire Fighter Tony Trus entertains a few fire fighters in a fire truck.

“We train to be firefighters, not to be volunteer firefighters,” he said. “We train at the fire academy, not the volunteer fire academy, and when we graduate it’s at the same operational level as any firefighter nationally.”

But it was the lessons he learned later from firefighters at the station and throughout the department who guided him along the way sharing knowledge and experience that provided the confidence he needed.

“They are the people who in about nine months prepared me to go into fires, do extrications and other critical calls,” Trus said.

They didn’t train him to pass the test, they trained him to perform the job effectively. Five years later, Trus is paying it forward as a part-time fire and hazmat instructor for Williamson County firefighter recruits. Like his trainers, Trus helps them find and sharpen their strengths and capabilities and confidence.

“Some are great at one task, but not other tasks,” he said. “We get to know their comfort level. It’s surreal and a proud experience seeing [new trainees] rockin’ it. Pride comes from a job well done, for sure.”

But sometimes that job is pretty harsh. Firefighters, like all first responders, often face difficult circumstances. The Fire Academy stressed watching for stresses in comrades, Trus said. If at any point a firefighter/first responder is demonstrating the effects of PTSD or other stresses, there is help. Sometimes it’s a friend who has been there and understands; and sometimes a comrade needs more. Professional services are available for any county first responder.

“We try to keep an eye on each other in our ecosystem,” Trus said. “We care about each other. We make sure we’re all doing alright. Whether training, at calls or having fun together, we hit the trifecta — our

camaraderie is great and everyone has stories. It’s good to know when I go home there’s an incredibly talented crew working overnight.”

Trus recalled a particular structure fire. It was a large, old antebellum style mansion on Long Lane.

“We got a call; there was a house explosion,” he said. “We thought we might need a sizeable amount of water.”

When the fire trucks arrived they saw the large, very old house did have an explosion; there was a hole in the roof with flames shooting out. There was a lot of damage but the owners wanted their 10-11,000-square-foot house saved. The owners hadn’t moved into the house but the construction crew was inside when the explosion occurred.

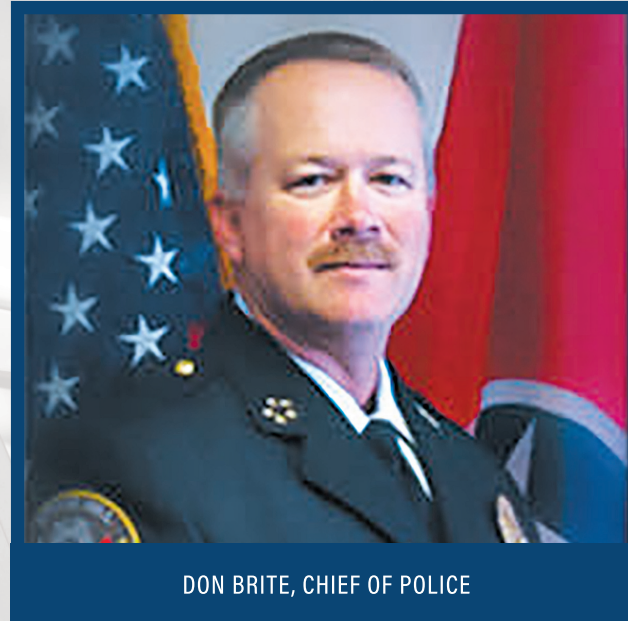
Three agencies pulled together — police, EMS and three fire departments — Williamson County Rescue Squad, Williamson Fire & Rescue and the Franklin Fire Department pulled their forces to save what they could. Only one person — a construction worker — was injured.

Some fires take many hours to put down. Heat, exhaustion, blood sugar, heart rate and dehydration take a toll on the firefighters and other first responders on site. Trus soon discovered Box 94, an old rehabilitated, repurposed ambulance that was transformed into a traveling refreshment service for first responders fighting fires in the heat of the summer or on a cold winter’s day. It provides water and Gatorade for rehydration and energy snacks to keep them going during a big fire and inclement weather.

Box 94 also provides firefighters who, for some reason, are no longer able to haul a hose, climb ladders or fight a fire but have the ambition to serve. They played an integral and important part of keeping firefighters safe and healthy.

“It takes a village,” Trus said. “It’s important to appreciate the many hands that get the work done.”

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**Chief Victor “Graig” Temple** is a highly experienced firefighter and paramedic with a career spanning over three decades. He began his journey in Millville, Delaware, serving in various officer roles, including Fire Chief. Chief Temple’s expertise extends to teaching firefighting and EMT courses and working as a Clinical Educator and Paramedic Supervisor. He holds a Master’s Degree in Engineering Services Management and has achieved certifications in Fire, Rescue, and EMS disciplines, including credentialing as a Fire Service Chief Executive Officer.

Don Brite, Chief of Police, has 30 years of service in law enforcement. He began working for the Columbia Police Department in 1993, moved to Spring Hill Police Department in 2007, promoted through the ranks and was appointed Chief of Police in 2010.



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# Spring Hill Lt. Tim Kennedy

BY CAROLE ROBINSON  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Spring Hill Police Department Lt. Tim Kennedy has seen a lot of changes in Spring Hill, but he's proud of the city and the people he serves. Before getting into law enforcement, Kennedy started his work career in the U.S. Army.

"I was stationed in Germany and in Saudi Arabia during the war in Iraq," he said. "Structure is important to me. I like parliamentary order."

After he was discharged he returned home and went into the car business, selling cars. He was miserable, but it paid the bills. In 2000 he became a reserve officer for the Columbia Police Department.

"I got a taste for [law enforcement] and was bit by the bug," he said. "Reserves open the door."

After a couple years he applied to join the Columbia Police Department, but the chief told him to go somewhere, get certified and come back. He did just that, except he didn't go back to Columbia. In 2004 Kennedy applied to the Spring Hill Police Department at a time when the city had begun to grow. He was hired and never looked back.

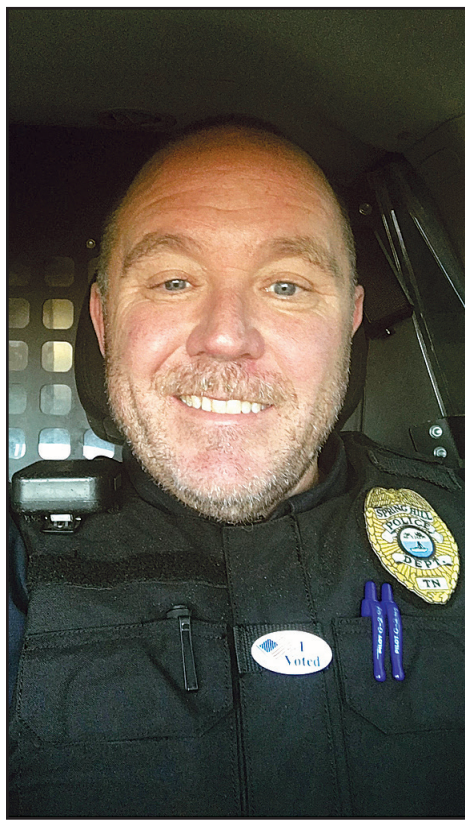
"I fell in love with the city, the people, the department and the administration," Kennedy said. "I'm extremely happy here. The citizens of Spring Hill are open to us doing our jobs."

Kennedy was promoted to sergeant in 2007 and appointed to the traffic division, which he enjoyed.

"I love it," he said. "Traffic is my passion."

Traffic is an opportunity to change driving behavior before something tragic happens, he added. He also had the opportunity to work with CID, the Criminal Investigative Team.

When the motorcycle patrol was created, Kennedy was one of the first officers in the unit. In early 2016 he was on his motorcycle



SUBMITTED  
Spring Hill Lt. Tim Kennedy in his patrol car ready to roll.

heading to an accident on Interstate 65 when a lady pulled out of her lane and hit him.

"Six months later I was back on my motorcycle," he said.

One of his first assignments when Kennedy, the father of four and grandfather of eight, returned to work was to bring joy to two little boys and their mom: 5-year-old Cooper, who loved motorcycles and police officers, his 4-year-old autistic brother Luke, a big fan of firefighters; and their sickly mom, who suffered from a debilitating lung disease.

Kennedy got on the assignment like bees to honey. He gathered up squad cars, a canine officer, SWAT truck and the Spring Hill Fire Department. With lights and sirens, they all showed up at the boys' home and presented Cooper with his own motorcycle wings pin and helmet and spent time with the brothers.

The event meant as much to



SUBMITTED  
Spring Hill Lt. Tim Kennedy enjoys talking with children in the community and making them friends of the Spring Hill Police Department.

their mother as it did to the boys.

Around 2020, "I was promoted to lieutenant over A Shift Patrol," Kennedy said. "I let younger officers take over the motorcycle unit. When I first started [in the motorcycle unit] there were only two of us. I had been on nights for a couple years and was happy when I came back to days."

Soon after his return he was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. To cheer him, his wife, knowing how much he loved his patrol motorcycle, got him his own motorcycle.

One day when he was back on car patrol Kennedy answered a call for help from officer Robert Colbert, who was caught in a domestic situation. The man had a shotgun so Kennedy grabbed his own shotgun before getting out of his car.

"The guy started running at me, then he ran to a house," Kennedy said. "I dropped my gun, caught him and got him down on the

ground. Robert came running and jumped on top of him and stuck his finger in the way of the trigger — the man kept trying to shoot both of us."

They finally contained him and got him to the jail.

"I still love [policing]," he said. "If I get up in the morning and don't dread going to work, I'm in the right place. I have a wonderful family who support me and keep me grounded."

He's now on the streets 50% of the time and spending 50% of his time doing paperwork and supervising the day-to-day operations on A-Shift.

"I still like to get out on traffic stops and do accident reports," he said. "I still want to get out and work."

But now finally settled into the new Spring Hill Police Department on Hathaway Boulevard in Spring Hill, Kennedy may enjoy the paperwork more.

# SONIC IS PROUD TO SUPPORT ALL WHO SERVE AND PROTECT OUR COMMUNITIES



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# Being the first to respond is second nature.

We honor those who serve and protect communities across Middle Tennessee. From law enforcement officers, firefighters and emergency medical services personnel to 911 dispatchers, public works employees and our own lineworkers, we thank you for your service.

Bringing good energy.

