



FIRE DEPARTMENT CONNECTION

For and About the Employees of the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department

The Apprentice

Firefighter Dwanye Lee's 5 minutes of fame caught him by surprise.

The member of Recruit Class 1-18 had no idea that the path he forged to join JFRD would become a focal point of his graduation ceremony last February. Nor did he anticipate a standing ovation from those in attendance.

Lee is the first member of JFRD's Apprentice Program to come on the job, and he

just passed his 11-month test, but more on that in a moment. During Class 1-18's graduation, Operations Division Chief Keith Powers publicly shared Lee's determined work ethic as a JFRD Apprentice. Powers' speech began with several examples of athletes and coaches who triumphed over adversity and seized opportunity. Then Powers shared some of the challenges Lee overcame during his time as an Apprentice.

For several months, Lee had no vehicle, so he relied upon public transportation to travel from his westside apartment to FSCJ's South Campus and the Training Academy. Three buses in the morning, and two in the evening. Once Lee earned his EMT, he began working for a private ambulance company, often more than 40 hours per week, to pay his bills. Powers described how most of Lee's shifts were overnight, which left little time for sleep, and less time for studying before attending classes the next morning. There were some days Lee didn't eat lunch because he didn't have the money.

When Powers finished sharing Lee's story, he recognized the Apprentice-turned-Firefighter by asking him to stand. Lee said the acknowledgment, the applause, the moment, and the sense of achievement will stay with him for a long time.

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Lt. Berlinda Tookes (left) was part of the JFRD team that helped Firefighter Dwanye Lee (right) excel in JFRD's Apprentice Program. Lee is the first Apprentice to come on the job. He is assigned to Ladder 1 on the C-shift.

Chief's Corner

When you're one of the busiest – and the best – fire and rescue departments, the clock seems to move just a bit quicker.

As I write this, JFRD is fast approaching 150,000-plus calls for 2018. We also have experienced a very busy year with training, including three recruit classes, one of which was triple the usual size. And, of course, the holidays are in full swing.

In our profession, slowing down isn't an option, but I have seen plenty of signs of embracing the holidays throughout our department. So many of you have taken joy in the season. You have decorated your stations, and in some cases apparatus. You have stepped up and participated in several toy drives for children. Some companies visited children in the hospital. I am certain many more stations have quietly brought joy to people in their territories simply because it's the holiday season.

The public we serve has delivered either baked goods or some kind of care packages to numerous fire houses. A few engine companies have escorted Santa to community events. And many of us have others on our minds, whether it's shopping for them or reconnecting with family and friends.

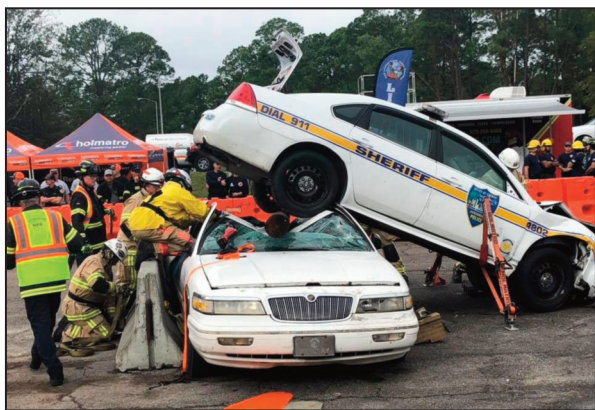
Each of us has a unique perspective on the holidays, but one common theme is considering others and demonstrating that you care for one another. In closing, as we're all running 100 miles an hour, I hope you get the opportunity to slow down and enjoy this time of year for what it means to you. For me, it's my last Christmas with JFRD, and I'm very thankful for everything you all do, day in and day out.

Kurt Wilson
Chief of Department

INSIDE: JFRD Extrication Team Wins National Competition, Advances to International

'Duval Wrecking Crew' Advances to International Competition

The Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department recently competed on a national level with other fire rescue departments' extrication teams. JFRD claimed the top award and will advance to the international competition in Paris in September.



JFRD's competitive extrication team, the Duval Wrecking Crew, just won at the national level and will travel to Paris in September to showcase their skills in a world competition.

JFRD members on the extrication team, known competitively as the Duval Wrecking Crew Corp., include Capt. Colin Aguilar, Capt. Chris Lewis, Lt. Jason Jones, Lt. John Ledford, Eng. Matt Braasch, Eng. Revis Coltrane, Eng. Mike Matos, Firefighter T.J. Temples and Firefighter Mike Yonn.

The two-day national event was hosted in Jacksonville in early November and involved more than a dozen teams. Sponsored by the North American Vehicle Rescue Association (NAVRA), the competition challenged firefighters with two, time-restricted scenarios involving scrapped vehicles and the extrication of live patient simulations.

The competition tested the firefighters' effective use of specific tools and techniques, including patient care. Teams had to successfully complete two scenarios, each within 20 minutes. The first scenario involved a large concrete pole in or on a vehicle that had to be removed from the vehicle to extricate the patient. All teams were allowed to use hydraulic tools. JFRD recorded the best extrication time of 12 minutes. In the next scenario, hydraulic tools were not allowed, and the pole was wooden. JFRD extricated the patient in 18 minutes.

According to NAVRA, the event is more than a competition for first responders; it also raises awareness about the global problem of vehicle accidents, related injuries and fatalities.

Hurricane Michael no Match for Ham Radio

Hurricane Michael's fury destroyed nearly all communications systems in Florida's Panhandle, but fortunately, amateur or "ham" radio survived.

And fortunately, Miller Norton, watch officer for JFRD's Emergency Preparedness Division and longtime ham radio operator, was monitoring the statewide amateur radio network (SARnet) around the clock. Soon after Michael passed over the Panhandle, Norton heard a ham transmission from Jackson County Emergency Coordinator Ricky Whittington. Jackson County was among the hardest hit during the major hurricane.

After communication via ham radio with Whittington, Norton was able to relay Jackson County's emergency requests to the American Red Cross and the EOC in Tallahassee.

"Miller was a great help in moving traffic for us to the state EOC via our SAR system on UHF," Whittington said by e-mail. "Between Miller on UHF and the other guys on the HF net, we were able to get

the resource requests into the state EOC."

"I love my ham guys," said Jackson County's Emergency Management Director Rodney Andreasen.

In his 18 years with Jackson County, Andreasen couldn't recall another time when all communications were lost. Hurricane Michael's damage was so severe, it took about two weeks to restore all communications systems, Andreasen said. He also characterized his local ham operators as "life savers" and said he has supported them since he joined Jackson County in 2001.

"All I need is one ham unit, and I know I can talk to the state," Andreasen said.

Norton has been an amateur radio enthusiast for several decades. He appreciates modern technology, but he's glad ham radio is still relevant.

"It's remarkable how back-up support radio systems not commonly used are still essential for life safety communications," Norton said.



Platinum Status Achievers

Ashley Burkhalter	Kevin Perryman
Brandon Greeley	James Polkey
Patrick Hernandez	Paul Rigdon
Larry Hinton	Steven Rohman
Scott Jaime	Michael Soto
Benjamin Kodatt	Chris Woloscuk
Michael Peery	

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Leading the FACE Team

Lt. Sheryl Rodgers, Engine 11

Sometimes, you just know.

Lt. Sheryl Rodgers noticed the lump and took quick action. Weeks later, she was hoping the call from her doctor would offer different news, but the day after her 38th birthday, Rodgers learned she had breast cancer. She wasn't surprised because she said she "kind of knew."

"There is some reason that I was diagnosed with cancer and God saw fit to spare my life," said Engine 11's Rodgers. "I don't know what that reason is, and I may never know in this lifetime."

Now a 5-year breast cancer survivor, Rodgers knows exactly why she took the lead on JFRD's FACE team, which is part of a statewide effort known as Firefighters Attacking the Cancer Epidemic.

"I joined the FACE Team in hopes that I can somehow help effect radical change in our department so that our next generation of brothers and sisters may never have to face the reality of getting 'that call' that they have been diagnosed with cancer."

Retired Battalion Chief Trevor Nelson launched the local chapter last year. When Nelson retired this summer, Rodgers took the lead as Chairperson. FACE Team officers include Co-Chairperson Capt. Richard Darby (a retiree and cancer survivor); Recording Secretary Firefighter Laurie Lecas; and District Chief Jimmy Snyder, the team's Benevolence Representative.

The team's mission is to prevent firefighter cancer by increasing and sharing best practices designed to minimize the risk of carcinogen exposure to field personnel. If you've noticed those "No Bunker Gear Beyond Here" signs that are posted at the entrances of the living quarters at every station, then you've seen some of the team's efforts. JFRD's FACE team also helped implement the department's "Code Delta" policy which allows in-service companies adequate time for decontamination of personnel and PPE after a fire. These preventative measures occurred with the assistance of the team's liaison Capt. Tracy Hooten, JFRD's Health and Safety Officer, and Division Chief of Training Gail Loput.

JFRD is one of only a dozen departments in Florida with a FACE team. The FACE team concept operates under the Florida Firefight-

ers Safety & Health Collaborative. It also has the support and endorsement of the Florida State Fire College, Florida State Fire Marshal's office, Florida Fire Chiefs Association, and Florida Professional Firefighters.

JFRD's FACE Team meets monthly, usually on the third Wednesday of each month, at JFRD Headquarters. Visitors are welcome, and if you are interested in joining the FACE Team, contact any of the Team Officers for more information. The team welcomes your participation and input, Rodgers said.

In a future issue of Fire Department Connection, we'll share the FACE Team's relationship with the Firefighter Cancer Support Network and the University of Miami's Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Engine 11's Lt. Sheryl Rodgers (photo left) chose to lead JFRD's FACE Team to advance and instill best practices to minimize the risk of carcinogen exposure to firefighters. She hopes the new generation of firefighters like James McCarthy (photo right) will adopt these practices and never face a cancer diagnosis.



JFRD RECRUIT CLASS 318

NOVEMBER 28, 2018

Firefighter/EMT Kierran N. Balcita

Firefighter/EMT Scott M. Brinson

Firefighter/EMT Zachary E. Butler

Firefighter/EMT Jeff Charles

Firefighter/EMT Ternithia M. Daughtry

Firefighter/EMT Nicholas J. Dendor

Firefighter/EMT Arman W. Ghazanfari

Firefighter/EMT Louis A. Hart

Firefighter/EMT Alexander J. Jewell

Firefighter/EMT Marquitta L. Johnson

Firefighter/EMT Michael Kes

Firefighter/Paramedic Kyle J. Kvies

Firefighter/EMT Kevin Leroy

Firefighter/EMT Brandon J. Little

Firefighter/EMT Darrell R. Miller, Jr.

Firefighter/EMT Hunter F. Parry

Firefighter/EMT Joshua Petithomme

Firefighter/EMT Gregory A. Thompson

Firefighter/EMT Shay A. Whelan

**CONGRATULATIONS
TO ALL GRADUATES.**

Lee Found Support in Apprentice Program

Continued from page 1.

The Apprentice Program launched in 2016 and offers scholarships for EMT and minimum standards classes at FSCJ's Fire Academy to qualifying individuals ages 17 to 21. Lee was in the first Apprentice class. He just turned 21, but Lee has been overcoming life's challenges and motivating himself since he was a young child. He played sports, made good grades in high school and even earned a football scholarship to college. Lee continues to push himself, and he sees the Apprentice Program and JFRD as more than a job.

"JFRD gave me the support I never had growing up," Lee said.

Lee credits the leadership and support of Lt. Berlinda Tookes and Lt. Dominique Bartley, both of whom are connected to the Apprentice Program, with helping him reach the biggest milestone of his young life.

"They basically gave me the tools to succeed. It was up to me to use them," said Lee.

It wasn't easy. Bartley said the Apprentice Program can be overwhelming for some students, many of them teenagers like Lee was when he started.

"It's a huge on taking for someone 19 years old," said Bartley. "We did all we could to encourage him and assure him he could do this. It was a journey of Dwayne learning what he was capable of and accomplishing what he set out to do."

Bartley has since returned to the field, and Firefighter Ronschelle Laidler is now assisting Tookes, who is the Program Coordinator.

Lee graduated from Terry Parker High School and earned a scholarship to play football at a Division 3 college. After one semester, he wanted to do something else with his life so he contacted his high school football coach. That's when Coach Charles Lewis began talking up the Apprentice Program to Lee as well as a career in the fire service.

"I still remember getting him dressed up to go to his [apprentice] interview," said Lewis. "I knew he could handle it academically, but I'm not sure he understood the opportunity. I just kept pounding it into his head."

Still a teenager, it took time for Lee to grasp the value of a career with opportunities to advance. Then it clicked.

"He went from the student to the role model," Lewis said. "I brag about him all the time." In addition to bragging, Lewis asks Lee to speak to high school students about the Apprentice Program, and the "role model" obliges.

Lee is assigned to Ladder 1, and he passed his 11-month test in mid-November. "It was a tremendous relief," he said.

What Lee says he enjoys most about the job is the camaraderie. It even helped him prepare for his 11-month test. He says the crew at Station 1 "quizzed me every day" and encouraged him to take his studies seriously. Fire 1 Battalion Chief Darin Hooten said Lee is top notch.

There are 60 students enrolled in the Apprentice Program. They are divided into three classes, which started at different

times, so the Apprentices are in various stages of completion. A total of six Apprentices have come on the job. Just like any JFRD applicant, Apprentices must complete EMT and minimum standards, and also pass the state exam to become certified firefighters before they are eligible to apply. Then they follow the same hiring process as all other certified firefighters.

Apprentices attend class four days per week: two days at the Training Academy; the other two with Tookes and Laidler, who teach the Apprentices a variety of life skills, including time management, discipline, study habits and conflict resolution. When two or more Apprentices have a disagreement, Tookes said they don't just reconcile, they must learn to work together.

Lee has no regrets about choosing the fire service over football. After years of facing one challenge after the next, he says that "Being on this department has really helped me. I'm not really struggling anymore."

By the way, once Lee saved enough money, he bid farewell to the bus rides and bought his own transportation and financed another vehicle for him and his girlfriend of three years. She is studying to become a nurse.



Dr. Charles Moreland (standing), who has served as JFRD's Director/Fire Chief and Division Chief of Rescue, championed the Apprentice Program during its inception and continues to guide its progress. Moreland is now serving as Director of Community and International Affairs for Mayor Lenny Curry.

JFRD Raises \$4,000 for COJ United Way Campaign

Maybe it was the concept of a Division Chief washing your POV or mowing the grass at your station on lawn day. Whatever the reason, JFRD's United Way Campaign raised about three times more than last year. Assistant Chief of Information Services Mark Rowley led JFRD's campaign and promoted a variety of creative incentives to encourage support. Though the winners of car washes and other incentives have yet to be announced, the incentives seemed to increase contributions. Another unique fundraiser was the "Photo with a Firefighter" for \$5 during a United Way rally in Hemming Plaza in late November.



Ladder 50's Firefighter Jordan Denby (left) and Engine 62's Firefighter Sue Horton (far right) brought out numerous smiles during a United Way rally in Hemming Park. City employees and other visitors to the "Firefighter Photo Booth" donated \$5 to stand for a photograph with the JFRD members.

Diesel Exhaust Extractors Debut at Stations 17 and 36

By the summer of 2019, JFRD expects to have all diesel vehicles in fire stations outfitted with an exhaust extractor system. Fire stations 17 and 36 are the first facilities to test the system which connects directly to the apparatus exhaust pipe and,



The diesel exhaust extractor system is automated and easy to use. JFRD expects to have the system connected to all diesel vehicles by summer 2019.

once the engine starts, immediately redirects the fumes outdoors via a hose system which leads to an exhaust vent on the station's roof. When the apparatus is connected to the extractor hose and the vehicle starts, a pressure-sensitive switch activates an extractor fan which runs for three minutes and redirects the exhaust outdoors. As the apparatus pulls out of the bay, the hose system automatically separates from the exhaust pipe and then retracts to its docking position. Once the apparatus returns to the station, it takes just a few seconds for personnel to reconnect the extractor hose to the exhaust pipe.

Engine 17's Lt. Thomas Gray and Eng. Wayne Brown both praised the system's ability to safeguard firefighters from exposure to the fumes and soot as well as how simple it is to operate.

Seventeen JFRD stations already have the mechanical infrastructure in place, and it will become operational once the electrical components are installed.

JFRD Hockey Team Claims All-Time Lead over Police with Latest Victory



JFRD's hockey team earned another checkmark in their win column when they defeated the police 4-2 in mid-December. The firefighters' all-time record is 3-2 in five years. Most of the team are JFRD members, but there are firefighters from St. Johns County, Clay County, Kings Bay and Orlando, and a few are firefighters waiting to be hired. Here's the roster: John Burger (EMT/FF), Pete Babnis (EMT), Patrick Welch (SJCFR), TJ Griffing (SJCFR), Mathew Floyd (EMT/FF), Patrick Schneider (JFRD), Paul Stevenson (CCFR, Ret.), Stephen Myers (JFRD), Darius Zariv (JFRD), Tommy Romano (JFRD), James Stratton (JFRD), Chris Perrotta (JFRD), Patrick Bowen (SJCFR), Martin Detig (KBFD), Tommy Lindholm (OFD), Asher Blumenthal (OFD), Ryan Eichelroth (JFRD), and Brian Neilson (JFRD). The game's 50/50 fundraiser will support the family of a JSO officer whose wife, a JSO bailiff, passed away following a serious traffic crash in early December.