

NEXT DOOR PEOPLE

INTERESTING CAREERS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Wildwood Manor's David Chaconas pulls double duty with BCC Rescue Squad



David Chaconas (right) talks with BCC Rescue Squad Chief Ed Sherburne (center) and BCC Baseball co-founder Bruce Adams (left) before a Big Train baseball game. Watch for volunteers in your neighborhood through October while their door-to-door fundraising campaign is underway.

PHOTO BY SEAN CARMAN

David Chaconas has been volunteering at the rescue squad in downtown Bethesda since high school. "It gets under your skin," says this year's squad President. An organization run entirely by volunteers, the BCC Rescue Squad requires a chief leader just like any small company.

While he was enrolled at the University of Maryland, David even called the Squad house home – he was a "permanent sleeper" ("to my mother's chagrin," he jokes), which means he resided at the Battery Lane squad house and caught sleep in between answering calls for help.

"We get roughly 11,000 calls each year," he says. A real estate project manager by day, David is now responsible for the squad's 1.5 million annual budget. Each of the big rescue trucks, which he jokes are the "world's largest toolbox," cost \$750,000 and must be staffed by at least three trained volunteers on every call.

The up side of the position: on Career Day at his daughter's school, David was able to make a grand entrance – in squad gear on a rescue truck, to the kids' delight.

In the spirit of charity, the BCC squad donated one of their hard-earned trucks to a Gulfport, LA squad after Hurricane Katrina devastated their station.

Greentree Road's Heidi Mordhorst practices what she teaches

"My whole life is children!" exclaims educator and children's author Heidi Mordhorst. A mother of two, Heidi has taught at Bethesda Cooperative Nursery School for eight years – capping off two decades of experience as a children's instructor in locales as distant and varied as London and East Harlem, NY.

Although she teaches poetry and creative writing, Heidi didn't have time to compose much of her own work. When her son was born, she used her reprieve from teaching to put together a manuscript of twenty short children's poems. On a whim, Heidi decided

to send the manuscript off to publishers; much to her surprise, one of them loved her book. "It was a stroke of luck," she says.

It took three years, but with support from her partner, Fiona, the school staff and her students, Heidi's book, *Squeeze: Poems from a Juicy Universe* finally made its way onto bookshelves last year.

Currently, Heidi is awaiting word about a new book and looking forward to teaching a children's creative writing class, "Word Play," this fall.



Heidi Mordhorst was invited to read at the American Library Association Conference, where she met some of her writing idols.

Think you have an interesting career? E-mail editor@nextdoornews.net.