



RESCUER

Brooke Davies

A BCC Rescue Squad veteran, Davies is trained to go on the most dangerous calls

By Carole Dell

She is a Yalie, a lawyer and a COO, but at the sound of a siren, Brooke Davies morphs into her alter ego: a rescuer who quick-changes like Clark Kent into 60 pounds of gear, climbs into a 53,000-pound rescue squad truck and rushes to the aid of the community.

Her duties range from lending a helping hand to a disabled person to entering a burning building to find a victim. Davies, 31, of Silver Spring, is a 12-year volunteer master firefighter/rescuer for the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad (BCCRS). She is one of just two female

master firefighters among the station's 75 rescue workers.

"She deserves the title of master firefighter/rescuer because few women go out to qualify on the heavy rescue truck, for whatever reasons," says BCCRS President David Chaconas. "It is like an undergraduate going for a masters, but even more difficult."

To earn the master firefighter/rescuer title, Davies studied to become an emergency medical technician and learned the essentials of firefighting. She also is a Swift-water Rescue Technician, a Rescue Diver and a Confined Space Rescue Technician.

Many of the calls Davies goes on are routine. Some are not.

During a 2001 snowstorm, Davies and her crew discovered a woman trapped in a car that had plunged down an embankment on Beach Drive near the Washington, D.C. line. Davies and her squad carried their 50-pound "Jaws of Life" tool down the 40-foot embankment. After freeing the woman, who had broken her neck but wasn't paralyzed, they used a basket and ropes to haul her up to the road through deep snow. "We gave her really good patient care," says Davies. For their efforts, Davies and her unit received a commendation from Montgomery County for their careful handling of a victim under adverse circumstances.

Her most harrowing experience involved a Bethesda house engulfed in a blaze in the spring of 2003. There were cars in the driveway and victims possibly trapped inside. As Davies and her crew searched the building, an evacuation warning sounded, sending the firefighters scrambling out through the flames. The house collapsed 30 seconds later. Luckily, the rescue workers escaped and there was no one else inside. "It is the only time I have ever been really scared," says Davies. "If the incident commander hadn't noticed the front of the house begin to sway, we may never have gotten out."

In order to keep fit enough to carry a 41-pound air cylinder on her back, or handle the "Jaws of Life," Davies works out five days a week at Bethesda Sport and Health.

When working, she rides on a 34-foot rescue squad truck that provides her and her team with air, axes, crowbars, night-vision cameras and other myriad pieces of equipment necessary to break into burning homes or cut victims from cars. "[It] is really just a giant moving tool box," she says.

Her paying job is as chief operating officer for Davies Consulting, Inc. in Chevy Chase, a firm her father, Grant Davies, founded in 1991. Grant Davies has firefighting in his blood, too. He splits his time between his company and the Bethesda Fire Department, where he serves as community president.

Brooke Davies' work as a master firefighter/rescuer has fulfilled a lifelong dream. As a child in Montreal, she joined in drills with firefighters in her neighborhood and after moving to Montgomery County encountered her first rescue squad truck as a 9-year-old during a "show-and-tell"

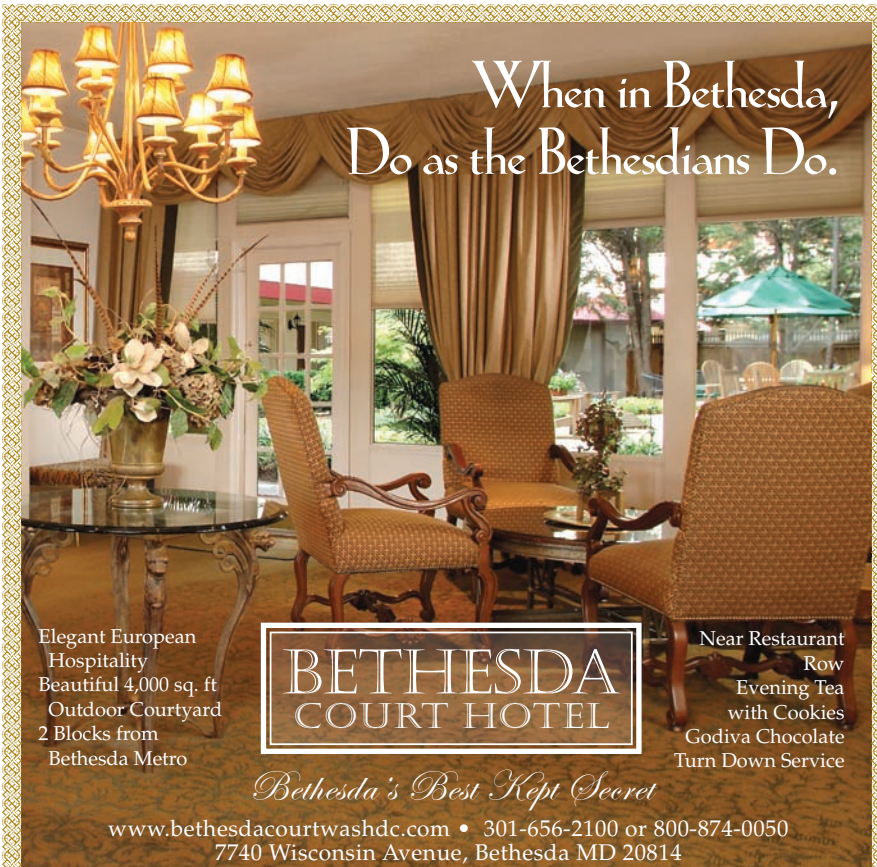
at Sidwell Friends School in Bethesda. "I was hooked," she says. Growing up on Bradley Lane in Chevy Chase, she listened in rapture as her brother Ryan talked about his adventures as a 16-year-old volunteer in the junior program at the BCCRS. Because they suspended the junior program, Davies had to wait until she was 18 to become a volunteer.

Davies is now a BCCRS life member, meaning she has logged more than 10 years as a volunteer. That seniority gives her the choice of continuing to ride on emergency calls or serving in another position at the squad. Davies chose both, going on calls and serving as BCCRS board treasurer.

"That is an awesome responsibility," says Chaconas. "She has made a lot of lifetime friends here and, fortunately, she is someone we can rely on."

Carole Dell is a writer in Potomac.

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