



February 2019

A Letter to Our Community on 2018 Accomplishments and the Year Ahead

The Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad relies on the support of many stakeholders, including its volunteer fire/rescue and administrative personnel, donors and community supporters, County officials and others to meet the Squad's mission of providing the highest-quality fire/rescue/EMS service to Bethesda, Chevy Chase and surrounding communities. This letter provides an overview of what we accomplished in 2018 with your help – and what we have planned in 2019 and beyond.

2018 Accomplishments

Operations, Staffing & Equipment

- **Responded to 8,279 Emergency Calls:** Responded to 8,279 emergency calls in 2018 -- nearly one call every hour of every day of the year. Operated the second busiest ambulance and second busiest heavy rescue squad in the County.
- **150+ Volunteer Paramedics, Firefighters and EMTs:** 150+ IECS-qualified volunteers – more than any other department in the County.
- **New Rope Rescue Training:** Rollout of new advanced technical/rope rescue training (with training for EMS personnel planned for early 2019).
- **New Equipment:** Procurement of advanced-technology on EMS units (e.g., additional powercot systems) and Rescue Squad (e.g., Amkus lifting cylinders, updated rope rescue gear, new rescue helmets and harnesses).
- **New Operational Scheduling Software:** Roll-out of new Aladtec scheduling software that is easier to use for members and command staff, and is resulting in better utilization of all staffing resources.

Recruitment and Retention

- **Eliminated Door-to-Door Solicitation by Active Volunteers:** This year, we ended the requirement that active volunteers – who face increasing demands and requirements to staff emergency apparatus – go door-to-door asking for donations. This has freed-up volunteer fire/rescue personnel to focus on operations and training, and should substantially help our recruitment efforts. This already has had a positive impact on active member morale, and we expect to help substantially with recruiting and retention.
- **2 New Recruiting Videos:** Completed and rolled-out two professionally produced EMS and fire/rescue recruiting videos (check them out at www.bccrs.org).
- **Began Construction of Modern Permanent Sleeper/Live-In Space:** Began work on a \$225,000 renovation to create new live-in space, improve permanent sleeper and bunk room facilities, and upgrade other areas.
- **New Website:** Launched a new www.BCCRS.org website with many new capabilities (*e.g.*, live feed from BCCRS social media accounts).

Emergency Fleet

- **2 New Ambulances:** Took delivery of two new ambulances (\$640,000), both of which include the state-of-the-art power cot/power load systems (which proved so beneficial the County has now begun using them as well). We anticipate taking delivery of another new ambulance in mid-2019.
- **New Heavy-duty Pick-up Truck and Van:** We also took delivery of two new utility vehicles (at a cost of more than \$100,000) that provide important support to our operations and personnel.

Facilities

- **Concluded Building/Land Development Deal:** We concluded our contract with a building developer and decided not to move forward with the re-development/construction plan on our property at 5020 Battery Lane. We have no current plans to sell or re-develop our property and facility at 5020 Battery Lane, though we do plan to undertake a strategic review at some point in the future to address the need for a new building to replace our structure that was built in the mid-1970s.

- **Improving Fitness Facility:** Physical fitness is important for fire/rescue personnel and a draw for volunteers. The board has approved funding and begun the process of upgrading equipment for the weight room, which will be relocated to the repurposed Civic Room space as part of the renovation project.
- **Secured HVAC Replacement Funding:** While not a high-profile investment, the board secured AMOSS funding to replace our decades-old HVAC system (to the tune of \$120,000). This should also help to prevent roof leak issues that have plagued the bunk and locker rooms.
- **New Training Infrastructure:** The fire/rescue operations group oversaw the professional installation of rope training anchors for advanced in-station training.

Governance and External Affairs

- **Increased Board Engagement:** The board of directors met more than 20 times in 2018 – a tempo needed to move the organization forward in key areas.
- **Improved Transparency and Communications:** We increased transparency by making available board and membership agendas, minutes, and other documents on Google drive, and we improved communication with the membership by consistently providing advance notice of board and membership meeting agendas.
- **New Resident Welcome Letter:** For the first time, we sent a Welcome Letter to all new residents (a campaign we intend to continue) to increase awareness of BCCRS among new residents. The letter included helpful household fire/safety tips and information.
- **Records Improvement/Cleanup:** We implemented a new document retention policy (an important element in not-for-profit governance), conducted a major clean-up and proper destruction of old files that had not been stored properly for decades, and laid the groundwork for implementation of new (largely electronic) records storage/management system.

Finances and Fundraising

- **Secured County Funding:** We secured \$176,000 in funding from Montgomery County – with a commitment for additional funds in next fiscal year.

- **Obtained New Squad Grant:** Through the good work of ex-President Bob Kretzmer, we secured a commitment from a location foundation to donate \$500,000 over 5 years (subject to matching donations in years 2-5) for a new heavy fire/rescue squad.
- **Improved Bookkeeping:** We hired a part-time bookkeeper to improve financial bookkeeping, reporting and analyses to the Board, management team and membership.

As noted above, these accomplishments were made possible by countless hours of effort by active, life, administrative and probationary volunteers working in support of our common mission and purpose. Again, to all those who contributed to these successes, we say: Thank you!

Top Projects and Challenges for 2019

While we accomplished a great deal in 2018, we face a number of challenges in 2019 and beyond. The County's fire/rescue system is changing rapidly, and we must adapt to these changing dynamics.

The board intends to lead a **year-long strategic review of operational and administrative model and activities** to ensure we can continue providing the highest quality service to our community. We hope to establish a promising vision for the Squad's relationship with the County, including what role we play in the delivery of emergency services in Bethesda, Chevy Chase and surrounding areas. This includes further engagement on relations with neighboring departments and staffing issues.

Another high-priority initiative involves identifying new sources of revenue to fund operations, equipment and other needs in lieu of the door-to-door solicitations.

Finally, we will be looking at new methods and locations for providing basic and advanced training to our volunteer and day staff, particularly given the challenges of member travel to the new public safety training facility near Montgomery County Airpark.

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As an organization – as a collection of committed and professionally trained volunteer EMS, fire/rescue, and administrative personnel – BCCRS accomplished a great deal in 2018, and we are proud of our efforts. But we will not rest on our past

accomplishments or history. To continue our tradition of excellence and service, we must work together and with key stakeholders to meet the challenges of 2019 and beyond. With your help – and support – we're confident we can do so.

If you have questions, or need more information about BCCRS, please visit us at our station at 5020 Battery Lane or send us an email: feedback@bccrs.org.

We wish everyone a safe and happy new year.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors

PS: Please take a minute to see on the next pages some of the extraordinary things our community has told us in the past several months.

Comments from Donors to BCCRS

Below is a small sample of comments we have received from online donors recently.

- Thank you for being so outstanding
- Thanks for your service. From a US Navy veteran
- Thank you for helping our family feel safe. People in our family have heart problems, and I am happy to know you might be there one day when we need you most.
- Thank you! Thirty years ago you rescued me after I collapsed from a bee sting and I am eternally grateful and give every year!
- Thank you for always being there to come and help those of us who live in NW DC
- I donate every year whether I get a reminder or not! As a neighborhood res for almost 50 years I know how valuable you are
- You're the best! Thanks for all you do, especially being available when needed
- Thank you all for your service! You are a blessing to our community. Please stay safe out there
- We are very proud of our BCC Rescue Squad! I would like to make a DONATION in HONOR of my brother, [name deleted], who is a former EMT and a paramedic. [Address deleted]
- The BCC squad cared for me and my daughter when we were in a car accident and I'm forever grateful to you!
- I hope I never need to call you, but I sleep better knowing that you are there if I do!
- You got me to Holy Cross Hospital in a blizzard in January of 1987. Our Son was born a few hours later!!! I am forever grateful
- Thanks for saving my life 31 years ago!
- Thank you for your important, life saving and dangerous work
- Love the important work you do in our community!
- Thanks for getting me to the hospital when I had a heart attack in 2012
- In memory of my Mother because you were always there to take care of her
- Thanks for all you do. We feel safer with you just around the corner
- I will never forget your treatment of me 10 years ago
- I "enjoyed" my ride to Sibley a couple of years ago; thanks again. Feel free to use my contribution for new shock absorbers
- You came and took my daughter, who is now 15, to the hospital 2x when she had seizures when she was an infant. We will never forget
- I hope I never need to call you, but I sleep better knowing that you are there if I do!
- Thank you for the care and attention transporting my mother to the hospital this spring.