

March 15, 2023

Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad Celebrates and Recognizes the Contribution of Women Volunteers

As we celebrate Women's History Month and the contributions women have made to our nation, the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad is also recognizing the many women who serve their community and neighbors every day.

At BCCRS, women play major roles in our operations and leadership. More than 35 women serve as active squad volunteer firefighters, EMTs and paramedics -- 30% of the squad's active volunteer members. Many of those women serve in leadership roles:

- Four board members, including one Board officer;
- Four operational officers leading night crews;
- Five active paramedics; and
- Three operational or Board committee chairs or co-chairs.

Women at BCCRS come from a diverse array of backgrounds and experiences. Many are working professionals; some are parents; others are students at local community colleges and universities. Some have graduated high school and are looking to add to their educational and work experience. Others have established careers and are looking for an opportunity to give back to their communities. Many have advanced degrees.

Below are profiles of just some of the women volunteers who contribute to BCCRS's mission of providing high quality emergency medical, fire and rescue service with compassion and professionalism.

Liza Wilson Durant

Liza Wilson Durant, PhD, serves as associate provost at George Mason University with a focus on strategic initiatives and community engagement. She is also a professor and holds the title of associate dean in the College of Engineering and Computing. She received her doctorate in environmental engineering from the Johns Hopkins University, where her research focused on bioremediation of hazardous waste in groundwater and subsurface environments. At BCCRS, Liza rides on Thursday Night Crew and is a member of the EMS Policy and Training Task Force. Liza was recognized as the EMT of the Year for 2022.



Megan O'Brien

By day, Megan O'Brien, PhD, is the vice president for global cancer treatment at the American Cancer Society, helping save lives across the world. At night, Megan has been there for her neighbors in their time of need as a volunteer EMT and ambulance driver at BCCRS for eight years. She serves as the Roving Night Crew officer and chair of the COVID Task Force.

Robyn Goecke

Robyn Goecke is a night crew officer, EMT, and ambulance driver at BCCRS, and also serves on the Board of Directors. She joined BCCRS in late 2018 after years of lamenting that she had not pursued a career in medicine. During the day, Robyn is a lawyer and has worked with health care and managed care companies for twenty years. Volunteering with BCCRS has enabled Robyn to meaningfully give back to the community; use her brain in a completely new, challenging, and different way; and hone her EMT (and emergency driving) skills.



Iana Sahadzie

Iana Sahadzie is a recent graduate of the University of Maryland, College Park, where she studied biology and Spanish. Currently, she works in the emergency department at George Washington University Hospital and participates in critical care and emergency medicine research at R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center. Iana makes multiple contributions to BCCRS as a night crew officer, paramedic, and chair of the EMS Policy and Training Task Force.



Katie Weber

Katie Weber is an emergency management specialist in a neighboring jurisdiction who credits BCCRS with her start in her career field. Katie joined BCCRS as a high school junior in 2014 and obtained her EMT certification prior to graduating and attending the University of Michigan, so she could continue volunteering when home on breaks. Katie returned to Maryland to serve as a live-in member at the Squad when her senior year of college was cut short due to COVID. She was elected as an officer and has led Friday Night Crew since 2021.



* * * * *

BCCRS recognizes and celebrates the unique experience, commitment, and professionalism that our female volunteers contribute to the life-saving mission of BCCRS. Anyone, young or old, with a passion for helping others and an interest in emergency care are encouraged to learn more about BCCRS at www.bccrs.org.