



# NEWSLETTER

SERVING THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1937

## 2023 Year in Review and 2024 Outlook

### Call Volume Increases, Demand for Service Increases Post-Pandemic

The EMTs, paramedics, and firefighters of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad (BCCRS) responded to 8,190 calls in 2023 – an increase of 1% over 2022 and an average of more than 22 responses per day. This is the most calls since 2018 and well above the five-year average of 7,400 per year. Among the most common types of calls: traffic collisions (914); unconscious or decreased level of consciousness (753); cardiac, chest pain, and stroke emergencies (685). BCCRS responded to 128 reports of a fire in a home, high-rise or other building.

*“Many of our most serious calls, including car crashes and pedestrians struck by vehicles, are preventable,” said BCCRS Chief Edward G. (“Ned”) Sherburne. “We all want our community to be safe, so we urge residents and visitors to avoid distracted and impaired driving, slow down, and look out for pedestrians and cyclists.”*



### BCCRS by the numbers

- 8,190 calls (2023)**
- 100+ active volunteers (EMT or above)**
- 12 fire rescue officers**
- 15 paramedics**
- 35 firefighters**
- 11 emergency response vehicles**

### Training for Operational Excellence

BCCRS prides itself on the knowledge, experience, and dedication of its personnel, and nowhere is this better reflected than in the Squad’s commitment to training and personnel development. Last year, more than 100 BCCRS members completed 9,500 hours of formal training, most of which occurred at the County’s public safety training academy. The training covered all aspects of our operations, including:

- Basic EMS Skills (EMT) (3,700 hours)*
- Advanced Life Support (Paramedic) (3,250 hours)*
- Firefighting/Rescue (1,550 hours)*
- Emergency Vehicle Driver (250 hours)*
- Officer/Management/FEMA (400 hours)*

This does not include thousands of additional hours during formal and informal training sessions that occur nearly every night of the week in our training room, parking lot, and sometimes even stairwells and offices.

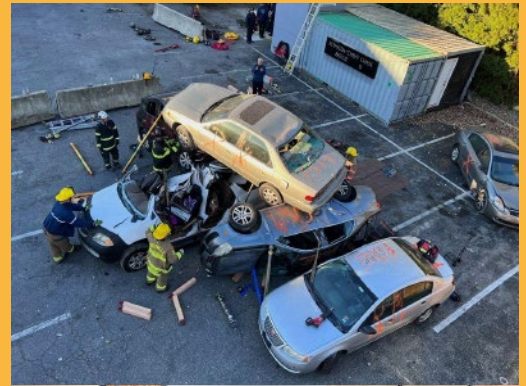
### BCCRS Hosts 4th Annual Rescue Weekend

BCCRS also hosted the annual Rescue Weekend on November 18-19, 2023, which brought together fire/rescue personnel from more than 10 departments across Maryland to practice advanced heavy and technical rescue skills. Led by 15 instructors, several of whom are BCCRS members, 50 students focused on hands-on skills, including heavy lifting and Metro car operations, rope rescue, man vs. machine scenarios, vehicle extrication, and advanced stabilization.

# New State-of-the-Art Equipment and Facilities

BCCRS is nationally recognized for its early adoption of advanced life-saving fire, rescue, and EMS technology. Last year, BCCRS invested in several important tech-related initiatives:

- Procured a new state-of-the-art ambulance, which should go in service later in 2024, with upgrades to provide enhanced safety for patients and EMS crews (estimated cost: \$480,000)
- Deployment of a new LUCAS battery-powered automated CPR compression device, which provides more consistent high quality chest compressions, frees up emergency personnel to deliver other life-saving care, and allows for safer transport of critically ill patients
- Construction of a new firefighter training “tower” that will allow BCCRS and personnel from nearby stations (career and volunteer) to practice real-world fire/rescue skills, including rescues from windows and firefighter “bailout” scenarios
- Secured funding for a major renovation of the in-station training room with advanced video and communications capabilities



## Professional Leadership and Governance

BCCRS maintained its 4-Star rating from Charity Navigator (the highest available) based on the Squad’s accountability and finances, leadership, and culture and community. <https://www.charitynavigator.org/ein/520583872>

## MEMBER PROFILES



**Catarina Banner**, originally from Berlin, Germany, joined the Squad in 2020. She admits that becoming an EMT was initially her daughter’s idea, but from the moment she found out about the opportunity to volunteer, the excitement never left her. The Squad has become a second family to her, with many shared new experiences, sometimes intense but always gratifying. In her “regular” daytime life, Catarina is a veteran real estate agent in Compass’s Chevy Chase office. Currently, Catarina is a sergeant on Roving Night Crew and a member of the Squad’s recruitment and retention committees.

**Mitchell Maggin** joined BCCRS over two years ago to learn new skills and help those in the community he grew up in. Mitchell is an EMT, ambulance driver, and chair of the recruitment committee. In addition to volunteering at the Rescue Squad, he works as a financial analyst for a commercial real estate company.







# BCCRS Chief Receives Prestigious National Award

BCCRS Deputy Chief Keith Stakes was awarded the 2023 George D. Post Instructor of the Year Award by the International Society of Fire Services Instructors (@fireinstructors). This award recognizes Keith's tremendous dedication and contribution to improving the national fire service, both at the Rescue Squad and as a fire protection engineer with the Underwriters Laboratories Firefighter Safety Research Institute. Keith first joined BCCRS as a junior member in 2006 when he was a student at Walter Johnson.

## What Makes BCCRS Unique? (From 2023 newsletter)

BCCRS firefighters, paramedics, and EMTs volunteer because they want to make a difference. Not for a paycheck but for the opportunity to provide help when help is needed the most. To be part of something bigger than themselves. To bring a level of passion, professionalism, and compassion to our life-saving mission. To belong to a community of like-minded public servants who are making a difference in our community.

BCCRS is unique in that it is the **only** local fire/rescue department in Montgomery County to be managed entirely and staffed primarily by volunteer personnel. That means most shifts are staffed with volunteer paramedics, firefighters, and EMTs – the equivalent of more than 50 full-time career positions. BCCRS also staffs more front-line fire/rescue/EMS positions than any other local department in the county.



BCCRS is the **only department in the Bethesda and Chevy Chase areas to operate 24/7 ambulance service.** By staffing multiple EMS units, BCCRS is able to supplement County-provided service in neighboring areas. In 2022, we responded to hundreds of calls in **North Bethesda/Rockville** (494), **Cabin John** (299), **Potomac** (181), and **Glen Echo** (139).

Finally, BCCRS is the **only** local department to fund most of its operational expenses through donations from individuals and foundations. That is why continued community support, particularly

financial contributions from individuals, is so critical to the Rescue Squad's continued operation and success. To learn more, visit the Squad's website at [bccrs.org](https://bccrs.org). To donate, please go to [donate.bccrs.org](https://donate.bccrs.org).

## Community Partnerships Strengthen BCCRS

As a community-based organization, BCCRS partners with businesses and organizations in the area to expand both emergency services and other benefits to the people we serve:

- For the past several years, Strosnidars Hardware has sponsored a "Round Up" at checkout fundraiser in October. All money raised supports our lifesaving work!
- The BCC Rotary Club provided generous funding for the construction of our new firefighter training structure, which opened in fall 2023.
- A local coffee shop and bakery, Grace Street Coffee Roasters, sponsored a pop-up coffee stand during our annual holiday tree lot with all proceeds supporting the Rescue Squad.
- BCCRS continues to host a weekly drive-through food distribution for members of our community who are experiencing food insecurity. The food drive is run by Nourish Now, a nonprofit food bank, in partnership with the Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce, Hyatt Regency Bethesda and St John's Episcopal Church, Norwood Parish.

Are you a business or organization in the Bethesda or Chevy Chase area with a partnership idea? Please contact us at [feedback@bccrs.org](mailto:feedback@bccrs.org).

# Ready to Be Part of a Team of Life-Saving Volunteers? Join Today!

It's 4:27 p.m. and the alarm sounds. The call is a multiple car crash on the Beltway. They need your help. You jump into action with the rest of the crew. Nothing can match your excitement when you hear the alarm. The exhilaration of not knowing exactly what you'll be responding to, but knowing you have the training and tools to help. The satisfaction of knowing that you may save a life tonight. Interested in becoming a member of the Rescue Squad? Members are required to stand duty one night per week from 7:00 PM until 7:00 AM. Positions include volunteer EMTs, firefighters, and paramedics.

Members receive free training, free uniforms, an annual stipend, length of service awards (similar to a retirement program), and a Maryland state income tax credit. Most important, you'll experience the joy and satisfaction of giving back to your community as part of a team of dedicated, professional, and compassionate first responders.

## Check Out BCCRS' Live-In Program

BCCRS offers free residential quarters and a \$1,000 quarterly stipend to volunteers who "live in" the station and volunteer at least 36 hours per week. Benefits include: Experience with a busy and training-oriented rescue squad in the National Capital Region (including one of the only stations with heavy rescue and advanced life support operations), semi-private rooms with dedicated lounge and kitchenette at BCCRS, and easy access to downtown Bethesda and the nearby Bethesda Metro Station. To learn more, visit: [bccrs.org/join/live-in](https://bccrs.org/join/live-in).

## Help Us Help You — Donate Today

BCCRS relies on generous individuals like you to fund most of our operational expenses. Of every dollar donated, more than 94 cents goes to operations, equipment, and other non-fundraising expenses. Rest assured, your money will be well spent: BCCRS has received a 4 -Star rating (the highest available) from Charity Navigator based on the Squad's accountability and finances, leadership, and culture and community. Donate today at [bccrs.org/donate](https://bccrs.org/donate).

*"The EMTs from BCC Rescue squad...were professional, comforting, and knowledgeable. They made me safe during a very stressful time."*

*"The EMT and driver were over the top wonderful and concerned for my care. They are great asset to BCC. Thank you."*

*"This experience, although personally unsettling for me, could not have been handled better by the BCC Rescue Squad. Very supportive, efficient, and professional. Very affirming and kind. Really helped me feel that I made the correct decision in calling 911. I have nothing but gratitude for this team."*



*"Everyone was very professional and reassuring. I really appreciated them."*

*"The BCC Rescue Squad was wonderful...I'm very grateful for the wonderful, life saving help and the caring professionalism of these [individuals]"*

*"Absolutely positive impact. Feel safe because of them."*

*"The team was great and I appreciate the professional performance and friendly manner."*

*"Both the EMTs were fantastic. Very kind very caring, very professional and made me as comfortable as they possibly could. It was the first time I had ever needed an EMT and a hospital transport and I couldn't have been more pleased. Thank you."*