

NEWS RELEASE

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SUFFOLK 911 OPERATORS DELIVER MORE THAN GREAT SERVICE

SUFFOLK, Virginia (March 3, 2011) When we call 911, we always expect the person on the other end of the line to provide the help we need in a crisis situation. Since January, however, emergency dispatchers have delivered more than just great emergency service. In fact, Communications Operators have directly assisted in the delivery of two baby girls.

We were only four hours into the New Year when Communications Operator Lartara "Sue Sue" Frazier received a call from a panic-stricken husband who was driving his expectant wife to the hospital to deliver their fourth child. Evidently anxious to meet her parents, the baby girl wouldn't wait until they arrived at Sentara Obici Hospital, and instead was delivered by her father in the front seat of his Dodge pick-up after he pulled over at the Pruden Center at 4169 Pruden Boulevard. Through the calm coaching of ECO Frazier, the anxious father was guided step-by-step through the entire delivery process while they waited for personnel from Suffolk Fire & Rescue to arrive. It wasn't until weeks later that Frazier's Supervisor even knew about this "special delivery", as she "just considered it a part of her regular duties".

Just three weeks later, Communications Operator Rachel "Beth" Gayle, a 17-year veteran of the department, also had a hand in bringing a new life into the world as she instructed a nervous grandmother, who relayed word-for-word directions to her daughter, who was assisting her daughter in another room with

an unexpected at-home delivery. Three generations were impacted by Gayle's compassionate, precise instructions. When asked about her feelings after the birth, she advised, "It was amazing. I was a little choked up. It's not something you do every day."

In both of these instances, the Communications Operators were able to rely on their new Medical Priority Dispatch System™ (MPDS®) to better serve the citizens of Suffolk in emergency situations. Implemented in June 2010, the Medical protocol enables dispatchers to accurately assess each emergency situation and send the best response possible while safeguarding valuable and limited emergency services resources and increasing safety for both citizens and responders. One key benefit the Suffolk 911 Communications Center now provides is a constant stream of crucial and updated scene information to field responders en route. This information better prepares responders to give precise assistance when they arrive at the scene – which was definitely helpful in the two deliveries described above.

It can be said that, "Dispatchers are the heroes behind the heroes", as they are the calming voice and invisible hand reaching out to help in time of need, and oftentimes not recognized for the work that they do. In fact, all of Suffolk's Dispatchers are heroes, and now, thanks to their training and compassion, there are two precious baby girls who may decide to follow in their footsteps one day to make a difference in their community.

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