



Skip Krein, Third Generation Volunteer Firefighter

My friends and I used to watch the fire trucks come up the road in the Memorial Day parades, or anytime there was a fire, and we'd get so excited. This one year, I think I was 7, we were so excited, jumping up and down and waving when this truck went by. But it wasn't a fire truck at all--it was a septic truck! The driver waved back. We were still pretty excited!

I grew up to become a volunteer fireman, and I love it. I joined when I was 17, though I couldn't answer any calls until I was 18. In fact, I took my first alarm on my 18th birthday, and I've been a firefighter for 18 years now. I try not to have any expectations when I answer a call. You get there and you figure out the situation and you get what needs to be done done. There are so many variables during an emergency call. If you think, oh, this is just going to be a routine alarm activation, you can get there and it can be a structural fire. You can't take anything for granted.

The Philmont Volunteer Fire Dept is really a brotherhood and a sisterhood; we have 7 or 8 female firefighters, and around 30 men. We watch out for each other. Even if someone has an issue with another person, once that alarm goes off, we're a team. We're really close, and I think that's because we're such a small but diverse community. We have people who are retired bankers, who are in the nursing field, who work for the highway dept, for a bus company... We're a melting pot of good ideas and it just works. We get the job done. I'm third generation. My father and grandfather were volunteer firefighters for the Village of Philmont. There are 3 or 4 of us in Philmont who are third generation. The work is passed down through our families. It's in our blood.

By Skip Krein