

FDNY Family Portraits:

EMT Dazmine Marshall

Since EMT Dazmine Marshall, Station 16, joined the FDNY five years ago, she has responded to hundreds of calls for people who are sick, injured, or giving birth. She has saved countless lives, but no matter how many appreciative messages she receives, she said one thing always makes her smile.

“When school lets out and kids say ‘thank you for what you do,’ when we’re recognized by youth in the community, it’s amazing,” she said. “It means we’re doing something right when they see us as people they can look up to.”

And this is extra special, she said, because she once was one of those kids.

EMT Marshall grew up in Chicago, and when she was younger than

10 years old, she and her mother returned from vacation to find her grandmother unresponsive. It obviously was terrifying and traumatic for the young girl, especially since they were so close.

They called 911 and EMS members quickly revived her.

“I didn’t know what they did, but in a few minutes she was up and talking – and I knew I wanted to do that someday,” she said. “From that day on I needed to know everything they knew, so I could do that for someone else’s family.”

After finishing school she went on to work in retail, with plans to eventually work in healthcare. But when she learned more



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about EMS, she said she liked the idea of being in the middle of the action. So she applied for a job in FDNY EMS, and waited.

“I thought, ‘I’m never getting a letter; I’m never getting called,’” she said.

She was working at JFK Airport at the time, and said she one day looked out the window to see JetBlue’s red FDNY plane taxi by.

“I thought it was a sign that I’m going to be an EMT and I’m going to be great at it,” she said.

Less than a week later, she got a call as she was leaving work: “The Academy starts in

two weeks, are you interested?”

She gave her two-week notice that same day and ran home “to celebrate – I danced in the middle of the street waving the paper around,” she said, laughing. “I got the job I’d worked so hard for.”

And she made sure that over the past five years she continued learning – whether through traveling around the world, reading, or returning to school (right now she is preparing to train to become a physician’s assistant).

And she has made it her mission to help inspire other kids and young adults to consider an EMS career.

“I want to let the community know that I look like them, and they can do this job, too,” she said. “You need to light your own candle.”

dle.”

That includes inspiring her family, many of whom still live in Chicago. She constantly talks with them on the phone and said now her cousin, who just graduated high school, is looking to become a doctor, and her younger sister wants to be a surgeon.

And a cousin, who was around 5 years old when she graduated from the Academy, said he wants to be an EMT one day, too.

“He told me, ‘I want to do what you do,’” she said. “And when I asked if he knew what that meant he said, ‘saving lives.’”