

Becoming My Childhood Hero

The siren is howling, piercing red lights are flashing, and my head is filling with a million questions wondering where the ambulance is going and who are the people brave enough to rush into aid someone during one of their worst nightmares. Seeing this from the back of my mother's car at an early age brought out my passion for medicine. My little, young brain could have never imagined the situations that they could be going to or what they may have to do in a matter of seconds at their designated emergency. I needed to know more.

A few years later, I was deciding which high school to attend. I grew up in Virginia Beach so there were several high schools available that had programs to expose students to different interest areas. One of the high school programs caught my attention. The Health Science Academy at Bayside High School. The goal of this academy was to share about the numerous career opportunities and for students to start learning what the healthcare field has to offer. I accomplished exactly that, I found the Physician Assistant career and found that it is the best fit for me because of the wide range of specialties I could choose, the level of responsibility the role has, and the flexibility to try different specialties at any time. As high school was coming to an end, I was already planning how I could make the most out of my time at Old Dominion University. This university was my best opportunity to grow in the direction of my goals through their Early Assurance Program with Eastern Virginia Medical School, the research opportunities available, and the location within the urban area. I immediately started planning how I would complete the criteria of the EAP program. Being able to commute to my classes allowed me to have the opportunity to attend an EMT course through VBEMS my freshman year. By the summer before my sophomore year, I earned my EMT certification and began volunteering with the city of Virginia Beach. Being an Emergency Medical Technician for the city has allowed me to learn numerous skills. I learned how to think quickly and stay calm under pressure. Leadership is important to keep my peers and my patients safe by making the best decision I can with the information available in every situation. Most of my classes at ODU are focused on the sciences, such as biology, chemistry, and psychology so I enjoyed using what I learned in class and applying it out in the field of emergency medicine. Every shift out in the field I thrive off learning from my peers who have more experience than I do. Aside from being a volunteer EMT, I am constantly exploring new ways to give back to my community and other communities through volunteering. I participate in multiple clubs at ODU that have a focus on healthcare. Through one of these clubs, the summer before my sophomore year, I had the opportunity to travel to Athens, Greece with several other students to volunteer in one of their local clinics. This free clinic was in the heart of the city of Athens and serviced mostly asylum seekers and refugees. This was an experience unlike any other, I was immersed into new cultures and served people from all different backgrounds with one common goal, to receive care. From this experience and my experience as an EMT, I learned that I love to show compassion and empathy when people need it most.

Now, several years later, I am the EMT in the front seat of the ambulance, waving at curious little girls just like I once was, looking back on how far I have come in a short period of time and now looking forward to next steps in pursuing a career deeper in medicine. Every day I am growing as a person and practicing the skills that make a Physician Assistant the best care provider and advocate for their patients.