

Dear Chief Rubin,

I would like to express my gratitude to the following members of Capitol Hill's Fire Engine 7.

Lieutenant Mills
Firefighter Farrow
Firefighter Beard
Firefighter Davis
Firefighter Mims

On Saturday, February 2nd, we were hosting a Fire Fighter themed birthday party for our 3 year old son and 15 of his toddler friends (and their parents). The highlight of the party was to be a walk around the corner to visit the fire station at 14th and C Sts., SE. When we called before leaving, we discovered that the station house was empty.

While we had back up plans in case the firefighters were responding to a call, there was still a sense of disappointment that the visit wasn't going to work out. I called the fire station on 8th Street on the off chance they could stop by with a truck...or do anything so these kids could see their heroes in person. Within minutes, I received a call back saying Truck 7 was on its way back to their station from across town and that they would swing by our place.

Now, clearly firefighters have much greater responsibilities than answering the calls of disappointed parents and toddler birthday parties.

These firefighters could just as easily gone straight back to the station and not bother with us at all - and I would have completely understood.

But they didn't.

Instead, they pulled their massive truck into the alley next to our rowhouse and opened the doors. Instantly, everyone at the party swarmed around the truck, cameras flashing, the parents' grins matching those of their kids. The firefighters were engaging, answered questions and created an atmosphere of excitement about what they do and how they do it.

Most impressive to me was how they turned their impromptu visit into a teachable moment. They gathering the kids (and adults) around as one of the firefighters climbed into his gear. They then had the kids interact with the firefighter, despite his frightful appearance with the breathing mask, etc, so that God forbid, should they ever see such a figure in their own home, they wouldn't be afraid and flee into further harm. Brilliant.

The firefighters passed out pamphlets, patiently answered a barrage of questions from parents and were helpful, friendly, extremely informative and upbeat through out.

It's impossible to express adequate appreciation for what firefighters do for the citizens of our city already. That they took the time and made this extra effort only bolsters their status as heroes.

Our family, along with several others at the party, will be donating to the Burn Foundation as a sign of our appreciation.

Sincerely,

James Williams