

Pass It On®...

From First Response to 11 Years of Friendship.

How EMTs saved a life and then enjoyed living it together.

Ask any first responder, and they'll tell you the hardest calls you will ever get are those that involve a child. Many EMTs put their hearts on the line when kids are hurting.

That was the case when a call came into an Indiana station about an injured person. At first, it seemed routine. But when paramedic Rick Allgood arrived, he found a 7-year-old boy unconscious. He had fallen over a railing and landed hard on his head, fracturing his skull. Luckily, the adult babysitter was a nurse. Still, the boy's siblings were in the room, and the situation could have quickly turned to panic.

Rick and other crew members calmed the children by explaining what was happening. One member took the children aside and reassured them while the others attended to their little brother, Will. In less than 10 minutes, the boy was stabilized and headed not toward the nearest hospital but to the best trauma center in the area. That calm decision under pressure saved the boy's life.

The crew's teamwork, their focus in a life-threatening situation for a young boy and their quick decision-making ability would be the most every parent would hope for in that situation. But the team also was touched by the family and concerned for Will's health while Will rested in an induced coma, his parents wondering how different their boy would be when he woke up. A brain injury often means difficulty regaining speech and motor functions. It can present lifelong challenges. Knowing this, one of the EMTs was always there with the family, and having a familiar face that was also a first responder helped comfort them.

"Every once in a while, you go on a call like this, and no amount of pay in the world can really replace the relationship you develop with the patient, the family," said Rick.

Over the next 11 years, after Will came home, Rick Allgood and his crew became part of Will's family. They followed Will's achievements on Facebook,

had regular visits with the family and celebrated the anniversary of Will's accident with donuts or pizza together. Will's mother, Marcy, loves her visits to the station. "I just admire you guys for what you do. It's amazing," she said.

It was a long road to recovery for Will. But as he gradually improved to full health, the first responders could breathe a rare sigh of relief. When your job is to comfort and save lives every day, it would be easy to forget names and people. But the paramedics who were first on the scene to attend to an unconscious 7-year-old boy would never forget. He became part of their family. And what a great family to be a part of.

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