

“Press Release FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE”

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**Hardeman County EMS Win Star of Life Award for  
Lifesaving Care of two year old Maddie Willis**

Date: Tuesday, May 12, 2009 6pm: Reception, 7 pm: Dinner, 7:30pm: Awards presentation  
Location: Sheraton Nashville Downtown Hotel, 623 Union Street, Nashville, TN 37219

Nashville, TN---In 2008, ambulance services in Tennessee responded to over one million 911 calls. The first annual EMS Star of Life Awards Dinner & Ceremony honored the dedication of those who provide day-to-day lifesaving services on the medical “front line” in Tennessee. The ceremony presented actual patient scenarios and reunited the EMS caregivers with the individuals they treated from the eight EMS regions across the state.

<b>Region 7 Award Winners - Hardeman County Ambulance Service</b>
Becky Hodge, EMT-IV, EMD
Shirlinda Savahl, EMT-P
Kaleb Sanders, EMT-IV
Bradley Petersen, EMT-IV
Brandon Carnell, EMT-IV

It had been a fairly quiet fall day in September 13th for Hardeman County dispatch when a call came in to 911 Emergency Medical Dispatcher Becky Hodge from an hysterical mother who had just pulled her unresponsive twenty-two-month-old daughter out of the backyard swimming pool. A 3 minute edited portion of the 911 call that lasted 15 minutes was played for the attendees.

Obtaining all of the necessary information was extremely difficult due to the confusion and anxiety of everyone on the scene, but dispatcher Hodge persevered and obtained the accurate address to immediately dispatch Hardeman County EMS. She assured the mother that help was on the way and then very authoritatively, yet compassionately, began to instruct her on how to determine if the child had a pulse or was able to breathe. When she was told there did not seem to be any signs of life, Becky calmly talked the mother through the life saving steps of pediatric cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Becky’s hours of training and her calm, reassuring and professional manner to a frantic mother and her other children allowed the responding EMS crews to be presented with a very viable patient who now had a pulse and was breathing on her own. Upon arrival, Medic Unit EMS 700, backed up by EMS 900, instantly began advanced life support. These EMS crews were comprised of Shirlinda Savahl, EMT-P; Bradley Petersen, EMT-IV; Kaleb Sanders, EMT-IV; and Brandon Carnell, EMT-IV. Dispatcher Becky Hodge, sensing the seriousness of the

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situation, had also dispatched AirEvac 58 to expedite the child's transfer to LeBonheur Children's Hospital in Memphis.

A healthy two year old Maddie Willis is neurologically intact thanks to the combined efforts of the EMS crews and the life-saving professional instructions given by Emergency Medical Dispatcher Becky Hodge. The Willis family was not able to attend the award ceremony but a thank you note from the family was read:

*Each day as we look at our daughter, Maddie, our thoughts often reflect back to Saturday the 13th of September, 2008. On this day we almost lost Maddie forever. Many miracles happened in our family in a very short period of time. Some of the people responsible for these miracles are in your presence tonight. On that day, I found two year-old Maddie in our pool " face down and not breathing. My daughter Jessie, who is 9 years old, called 9-1-1. I didn't know who the angel on the other end of the line was until almost a week later, but it was Becky Hodge. Becky was very calm and in control of everything I needed at the time to help Maddie survive this tragedy. Becky never lost her cool. She reassured me the entire time I was on the line with her. She told me exactly what to do. She encouraged me as things began to happen and reassured me that more help was on the way. I had been trained to perform CPR in the past, but it never occurred to me on that day that I would play a role in saving my daughter's life. When it is your own child who isn't breathing, common sense and practicality take a backseat to panic and fear! Once Bradley and Shirlinda arrived, whisked my Maddie away into the ambulance, and shut the door so they could begin to work with her without distractions, Becky told me what would happen next, with regard to the helicopter trip and hospital destination. God couldn't have sent more perfect angels into my life on that day. He and all of His other angels were cheering us on! If these members of our Hardeman County Emergency Medical Team hadn't responded and reacted in the professional manner in which they did, I would have been planning a funeral instead of looking forward to planning a birthday party in July and celebrating our precious daughter's future. Thank you to Becky, Shirlinda, Bradley, and Brandon from the bottom of our hearts. They helped save a precious life which enabled us to keep our family of six complete. Words will never express the gratitude that swells our hearts.*

*Sincerely, The Willis Family*

*Tanya, Roger, Anna, Jessie, Ella, and Maddie*

The EMS Star of Life is sponsored by HCA/TriStar, Methodist Healthcare/Methodist University Hospital, Air Evac Lifeteam, Erlanger Health System/T. C. Thompson Children's Hospital, AAA Clubs of Tennessee, Le Bonheur Children's Medical Center, Tennessee EMS Education Association, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Adams and Reese LLP, East Tennessee Children's Hospital, TeamHealth Midsouth, and Tennessee College of Emergency Physicians.

The mission of Tennessee Emergency Medical Services for Children Foundation, the host of the EMS Star of Life, is to reduce child and youth disability and death due to severe illness and injury.