



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAEMT ANNOUNCES ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

Clinton, Miss. – In honor of National EMS Week this week, and to provide members with the opportunity to voice their pride in their profession, NAEMT introduced a new essay contest: Why EMS Matters... to You.

This year's essay contest winners are:

First place - Kelly Buddenhagen, Ellijay, Ga.

Second place - John Wilbanks, Powell, Tenn.

Third place - Arron Paduaevans, Cherry Valley, Ark.

"EMS matters to me because we answer the call no one else hears," writes Buddenhagen, a paramedic with Gilmer County (Ga.) Fire and Rescue, in her essay. "Buildings crumble, cars crash, people fight and children cry. In EMS, we train, we respond, we serve, we care. ... We are entrusted with life in all its fragility, intervening with gentle hands, sharp skills, and encompassing knowledge. EMS is about taking the opportunity one moment at a time to show another person gentle reassurance that someone is there to help them. From all the textbooks and from all the training, the most important skill we bring to the scene is the human factor that we care enough to work in EMS."

Wilbanks, a paramedic and quality improvement officer with the City of Knoxville (Tenn.) Fire Department, writes: "EMS matters to me because every day is an opportunity. Every call is an opportunity to serve my community and help others, often in a moment of crisis. ... Going home at the end of the day, I know I have accomplished something and have touched lives both physically and emotionally. Going the extra mile in everything I do gives me a sense of satisfaction in a job well done and I am proud to help others when they are confronted with some of the worst moments of their lives. I believe EMS truly makes a difference and I hope I never take for granted the opportunities I am given."

"EMS matters to me because I am blessed to be an EMS provider," writes Paduaevans, a paramedic with the Horn Lake (Miss.) Fire Department. "I'm thankful for the opportunity each day to do what I dreamed of as a child and worked so hard for as an adult. What makes a tough job so much easier is the camaraderie I find with my fellow medics as I've found in no other career field. ... Most of all EMS is so important to me not just for what I give to my patients, but what they give to me. I know that for that one terrifying instant, that one brief ambulance ride to the emergency room, that one interminable moment on a busy, rainy, and cold freeway in the middle of a ten-car pileup, my patients trust me, sight unseen. It is my responsibility to care for each and every one of them as I would care for my own child, my wife, or my mother. It is the feeling I get when I look into the eyes of a patient in pain, fearing for their life, or a frightened mother of a sick child. It is then that I know that my job is to make it all better, and to make it better now," he writes.

Essay contest prizes are gift certificates to amazon.com. To view the winning essays in full, please see the "Why EMS Matters Essay Contest" page in the membership section of www.naemt.org.

NAEMT is the nation's only professional association representing all EMS practitioners, including paramedics, emergency medical technicians, first responders and other professionals working in pre-hospital emergency medicine. NAEMT members work in all sectors of EMS, including government service agencies, fire departments, hospital-based ambulance services, private companies, industrial and special operations settings, and in the military.

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