

To the First Responders

Read online with photographs and supporting records

To the police officers, firefighters, EMTs, dispatchers, and first responders who answered the call for Bella:

You entered our lives on a day none of us could have imagined.

For me, February 22, 2025 became the dividing line between the life I had before and the life I have lived since.

You answer calls without knowing what will be waiting for you. On February 22, 2025, you answered ours during the worst moment of my life.

I remember the humanity shown during circumstances that no parent should ever have to experience.

There are details of that day that will always be painful for me. There are moments I wish I could erase and others I know I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

But among those memories will also be the people who showed up when Bella needed help.

You came for my daughter.

You came through the door and tried to help Bella when she needed it most. Whatever else I carry from that day, I will remember that.

And I also want to remember those whose faces I may never have seen — the dispatchers who answered the call, communicated what was happening, and helped send people to Bella. You were part of that response too.

I know that when first responders leave one emergency, another call may already be waiting. But I also know that some calls must stay with you.

Bella was ten years old. She was deeply loved. Behind the call and the address was my daughter, with a whole life of memories and people who loved her.

I hope that in whatever way you remember that day, you know that your presence and your effort mattered to her father.

The outcome was one I would give anything to change. But gratitude does not disappear simply because grief remains.

As her father, I will never forget that when Bella needed help, you answered.

Thank you for coming, for trying, and for being there for my daughter.

With gratitude,

Dukens Pierre-Louis
Bella's father ("Babe")