



A True Balancing Act

Ally Thompson Juggles School, Sports, Work And EMS Training

BY DOUG FORD

At first glance, Mary Alyson "Ally" Thompson seems like any other teenager, energetic and inquisitive, always on the go.

Look closer and you find someone with a focus and drive that many adults would love to emulate.

Independent from an early age, Thompson has managed a delicate balance between work, sports and school, while volunteering her time as an emt.

She played both softball and volleyball all four years in high school, beginning her emt training while a sophomore.

"I've always wanted to do it, ever since I was a little girl," recalled Thompson.



"I remember seeing the big trucks go by with the shiny lights and sirens and thinking I wanted to do that.

"I remember thinking it's a cool job, the lights, sirens and going fast!"

Thompson's interest in the medical field has only increased from that point on.

"It's just a passion I've always had, knowing I can help somebody with my own two hands and making a difference, and it makes me feel good," she said.

please see **THOMPSON/B2** ▶

Volunteering her time to help others has always been a priority for Thompson.

"I guess I'm just a busybody and like to get involved, and I have to always be doing something, so being in the ems world has had a big impact on my life," said Thompson.

"I've seen the good, bad and the ugly."

Thompson admits to having reservations when the toner calls her to another accident scene, but she has learned to approach things in a professional manner.

"You always have the thought in the back of your mind about why you are here and why you are doing this, but my adrenaline starts flowing.

"But, it's where I feel I need to be," she emphasized.

"I just don't think about what I may encounter, whether it be family, friends, or someone I don't know, but I can't let that affect me."

Working an accident can be a sobering experience for anyone, and Thompson is no exception.

"I've seen people in accident scenes who've made mistakes, and I keep it in the back of my mind not to do what they've done, especially when it involves drugs and alcohol," she said.

Much of the discipline and focus Thompson displays in working an accident scene are a result of her participation in team sports over the years.

Thompson has played sports since she was five or six years old, beginning with t-ball, then softball, before discovering volleyball in her eighth-grade year. She has managed to keep her emt certification on track, despite her involvement in sports while in high

school, with her goals intact.

Thompson said she has been certified in cpr and emt basic, and has just completed a pre-hospital life support trauma class.

"I'm going to Jefferson College of Health Sciences in Roanoke and obtaining a paramedic degree," said Thompson, who is sticking to her goal of being a flight nurse, despite a self-confessed fear of heights.

Thompson said she wouldn't have been able to manage her balancing act without the support

of family, friends, teammates and teachers.

"My parents have raised me well, and my mom has been there through thick and thin.

"And, I've always had good friends and coaches, so it's all fallen into place for me."

As far as advice and suggestions for those who do or don't volunteer their time, Thompson's view is "to each his own."

"I'm not the type to judge anyone, as far someone who doesn't volunteer, because everyone has different life experiences," she noted.

Quoting one of her high school coaches, Thompson said, "Everyone needs to find his or her own passion and have the heart, desire and confidence to go forward and do it."

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