

**Meet
Sherry McDonald**



Sherry McDonald is a volunteer EMR with the Cavalier Ambulance Service. She is married and has 2 daughters. Sherry and her husband also have 2 grandsons. They are the light of their eyes. Sherry works as a Pharmacy Technician at Ye Olde Medicine in Cavalier. She also does Juvenile tracking through Lutheran Social Service.

When asking Sherry what event happened that was the deciding factor to join Cavalier Ambulance Service, she told us this sincere story. In the winter of 1999, my father suffered an aneurysm. I was so impressed by the level of care he received from the CAS while being transported to Grand Forks. Even though my father would not survive, they worked so diligently on him. As they left our family in

Grand Forks, each one of the team came in to see us and wish us well. With a hug for all, they were on their way back home. I now know after working with this team, **THEY KNEW** my father would not survive, but never did they treat him with anything less than all they had. I was the typical person and thought “Oh I could never do this!” I kept putting it off until finally that little voice in my head just wouldn’t go away or shut up. So I made the call.

Sherry enjoys working with EMS for the sense of stability and reliability that it brings to her friends and family. She enjoys helping the people of the community and her home. Sherry says, “Rewards cannot be measured by a single person. The rewards are acquired with every call. With every call, as a team, we fight for the weak and ill. We bring comfort to people in pain and a sense of hope for the residents of our community. We bring familiarity and tranquility with knowing the majority of people we respond to.”

The most important responsibility that Sherry has on the CAS is the safety of her crew. “Each time I sit in the driver seat of the ambulance, I am responsible to get my team and the patient to their destination safely. In the rural area where we live there are many natural obstacles to overcome, as well as all kinds of weather that affects the driving conditions. I guess you could say we are like the US Mail, thru wind, sleet, or hail, the ambulance service never fails.”

Helping her friends, family and community seems to be enough reward for Sherry, but what are the sacrifices of giving your free time by wearing a pager? “To say that at times it is not a sacrifice would be an untruth, but I believe in the message that it takes a village. True to that concept, you give of yourself even when it is not easy or convenient. Like many small towns we have a limited number of people that we can draw from, so it is extremely important to step forward and be part of the village. The ambulance service is how I have chosen to volunteer. I am fortunate to have my family be fully supportive

and understanding of my commitment, even though, they have had to sacrifice by not having Mom there. It is a sacrifice that is chosen to be accepted.”

Our next request of Sherry was to tell us about one particular incident in EMS that made an impact in her life, and please do not break patient confidentiality. She said, “This incident is very close to my heart and there is no breach of privacy as this happened to my family. On a warm May evening in 2010, my husband suffered sudden cardiac arrest. By the grace of God, I remembered how to perform the CPR I had been taught by my service. My daughter placed the call to 911 and gave all the pertinent information needed. I knew that in a few short minutes the best team would be coming through our doors. Looking back on it now, I know that all the skills I possessed that night, the CPR, the calmness, and being able to relay the correct information to the dispatcher, was all parts of the training I had received from my service. Imagine my tremendous relief as all 3 of our paramedics and an EMT came to the house! I quietly backed out of the room to let them do their job. I knew all their attention needed to be with my husband. The impact of watching and trying to assist the EMT’s and paramedics that night greatly affected my daughter. She sat upstairs while they revived her father and helped them with anything they needed. It isn’t easy for her to pinpoint exactly when she realized how amazing and precious the Cavalier Ambulance Service is to her. We were heading south to Grand Forks to transfer Jim when she looked around and saw the emotion my team and ‘other hospital family’ were feeling for her as well as me. She was touched by how my team operates with swift procedure but a true understanding of caring for a human being. It takes strong people to do what we do she said, but more so, it takes a strong heart to care the way we do for every call we take.”

What would Sherry say to encourage others to join the pre-hospital field? “What I can tell you is the impact that happens to the patients and family each time we answer the call. After what happened in our family, my 21 year old daughter has decided to make the sacrifice with happiness as she saw the sacrifice that my team made for her father. We are truly happy to give ourselves to others in time of need and bring a sense of hope when all is lost. So now I am passing the light on, my daughter made the call.”