

# From Juniors to Volunteers



photo by EMILY WEAVER

Left to right, Ross Clark, Trevor Mashburn and Brandon Parker stand outside Fire Station 1 of the Kings Mountain Fire Department.

## Three young men have joined the ranks of KMFD

By EMILY WEAVER  
Special to The Herald

Don't let their age fool you, the youngest members of the Kings Mountain Fire Department have been training to fill the boots of a full-fledged firefighter for years.

Trevor Mashburn and Brandon Parker were 16 and Ross Clark was 15 when they restarted the Junior Firefighter program at the Kings Mountain Fire Department in February 2009. They were the department's first round of junior recruits in years. These juniors are now volunteers.

"When I was a kid, I always wanted to be a fireman," said Trevor, who officially joined the force in 2010 along with Brandon, a second generation fire-

fighter. The city's Junior Firefighter program began in 1976 and was active through the mid-80's, helping young boys grow into men, many of them firemen. Then the sound of questioning curious juniors in the station fell silent... until Ross emailed Assistant Fire Chief Jamie Black asking him to restart the program in August 2008.

Ross, a third generation firefighter, wanted to follow in the footsteps of his father and his father's father and was eager to learn the line.

"I always wanted to be like my Dad," he said.

Ross' spark of curiosity rekindled a passion in the department and soon the Junior Firefighter program was reborn. Trevor, Brandon and Ross were its first recruits.

They took classes, climbed through a ropes course, rappelled down walls, trained in agility, safety and rescue and toured a fire station in Charlotte, where they saw the top rescue truck in the state. Under the leadership of Engineer Rocky Pack, they got an inside look at the world of fire and rescue and of community service. They were hooked.

Ross, now 18, joined the force as a volunteer this year. Now the three youngest members at the station - still in their new blue helmets - have helped fight fires inside and outside, responded to emergency calls and wrecks and have helped teach students about safety in local schools.

Trevor remembered his first call was in response to a

wreck on Hwy. 74. Ross said his first call was to another accident when a truck overturned on the same highway. The first house fire he went to was in response to a kitchen fire in a home off of Baker Street. But the first fire he helped fight was when a barn caught ablaze on Canterbury Road. He was one of the first on the scene.

"It's nerve-wracking when you're the first on the scene," Ross said, adding that the first to arrive has to be the first line of defense, getting as much information as possible to help the ones in charge when they arrive. "All you see and perceive is all they have to go on."

"You feel a lot of adrenaline going to a fire, you just got to get your nerves together and be calm," Bran-

don said. Ross now helps lead the program at KMFD. All three say they are excited to be on the force.

"They're doing great," said Fire Chief Frank Burns. "This has been a well worthwhile program for the fire department."

"This is a good program," Trevor said. "Once you get in you see how important it is to know your job. This is good training for a volunteer firefighter."

All three recommend the program to anyone under 18 who is interested in firefighting.

The program is good to "get your feet wet," said Ross, an Eagle Scout. "But it's not just about putting the

wet stuff on the red stuff, there's more to it."

He added that he learned a lot in the Junior Firefighter program, which taught him more than about fire, rescue, safety and community service. He said it also taught him a lot about life, responsibility and respect.

"This is a great thing for anyone wanting to go in the service," Brandon said.

Trevor Mashburn, 20, is the son of Kent and Beverly Mashburn of Kings Mountain.

Brandon Parker, 20, is the son of Lisa and Bobby "Chip" Parker of Kings Mountain.

Ross Clark is the son of Claude and Anne Clark of Kings Mountain.

## Styers family receives good news

Cancer free! That's the good news that baby Justin Styers' family received from doctors Aug. 21 at Levine Children's Hospital in Charlotte.

"After his third treatment of chemotherapy and MRI of the brain and spine doctors told us that the brain tumor was gone," said his grandmother, Tammy Styers this week.

Mrs. Styers said that Justin will undergo three more treatments of high dose chemotherapy over the next three months and three stem cell transplants. "We want to thank everyone for their prayers and continued prayers for Justin and our whole family," she said.

Residents can keep up with Justin's progress by online clicking on prayersfor-

justin.com.

Justin's grandfather Richard Styers Jr. is at the baby's bedside 24/7, says Mrs. Styers. "Richard has been out of work since April and is thankful he has the opportunity to be with his precious grandson he calls Paw Paw's little man," said Grandma Styers.

Justin is the son of Josh Styers and Brittany Hiser.

Levine Children's Hospital at Carolinas Medical Center has become second home for Justin's young parents and other family members since he was diagnosed at age 10 months May 1 with a very rare brain cancer called Medulloblastoma.

Justin Styers is pictured with his parents, Josh Styers and Brittany Hiser.





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## Fire at Steag Energy ruled accidental

Firefighters from three departments - Kings Mountain, Bethlehem and Oak Grove spent five hours Aug. 29 dousing hot spots after Steag Energy Services LLC caught on fire on Linwood Road.

Assistant Fire Chief Jamie Black said that firemen responded to the blaze about 4:30 a.m. He said an employee arrived to work early and spotted the fire on the company's roof.

Black said that 20-25 firefighters worked to contain the pockets of hot spots underneath the building's roof. He said the plant is still operational despite damages that could run \$500,000 to the roof and machinery inside the building damaged by smoke and

water. No one was hurt in the fire which Fire Chief Frank Burns ruled accidental.

Steag recently announced expansion plans earlier this year that would create 45 new jobs and a \$9 million investment to the county. Steag cleans catalysts used by power plants to control the emission of nitrogen oxides.

Arson is suspected in a fire Thursday night that damaged a laundry room and kitchen in an apartment on Alexander Street. Black said damages could amount to \$25,000. Kings Mountain Police and Kings Mountain Fire Department are continuing investigation in what they are calling a suspicious fire.

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Phone (704) 739-7496 • Fax (704) 739-0611

Office: 700 East Gold Street • Kings Mountain, NC 28086

E-mail: kathy.kmherald@gmail.com

Wendy Isbell - Publisher  
wendy.kmherald@gmail.com

Lib Stewart - Staff Reporter  
lib.kmherald@gmail.com

Gary Stewart - Sports Editor

Rick Hord - Sales Manager

Lisa Zyble - General Operations Manager  
Graphics & Composing

Wayne Conner - Business Manager

Kathy Reynolds - Circulation/Classified

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