

From: City of Saint Paul <cityofsaintpaul@govdelivery.com>
To: <nick.nelson@stpaul.gov>
Date: 9/9/2009 3:26 PM
Subject: Saint Paul to Graduate First Class of Pilot EMS Academy

header St. Paul Banner Image

For immediate release

September 9, 2009 Office of Mayor Chris Coleman Contact: Erica Schumacher

651.266.8531

erica.schumacher@stpaul.gov

Saint Paul to Graduate First Class of Pilot EMS Academy

"First-in-the-state Effort Attracts Minority Youth to EMS, Firefighting Careers"

SAINT PAUL - Saint Paul will honor its first graduates of the new Emergency Medical Services Academy at a 5:00 p.m. ceremony Thursday at Dayton's Bluff Recreation Center, 800 Conway St.

"Saint Paul has a world-class fire department, and through this pilot we are opening doors to a professional career for young adults who reflect our diverse community, whether they work in our department, local hospitals or health clinics. I congratulate the students who worked hard and graduated," Mayor Chris Coleman said.

Recommended as a Best Practice by the U.S. Conference of Mayors and recognized by the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the pilot program launched this summer to bring young adults from low-income households to careers in EMS and firefighting while helping Saint Paul close the achievement gap for students of color and women.

"The EMS Academy opened the door to many opportunities that I did not know were possible. It was definitely a rigorous class and it made me a better person by bringing out the best in me. Most importantly, the Academy helped me choose a career that allows me to help people every day," said student Alexavier Collado.

The first-in-the-state academy - an extension of Mayor Chris Coleman's Ready for School, Ready for Life education initiative - pays participants up to 25 hours a week while they go through a 10-week emergency medical technician certification program. The academy provides opportunities for young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 to learn job skills and qualify them to take the firefighter test in Saint Paul, broadening the pool of applicants for the fire department.

"This is a unique program - paying young adults from our neighborhoods to learn a life-saving skill, earn professional certification, and overcome a significant financial hurdle into the workforce," Fire Chief Tim Butler said. "These students are now prepared to compete for high paying jobs in health care, education, and the fire department."

A collaboration among the City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County, and Inver Hills community college, the pilot academy held classes three days a week. Students were paid \$7.50 an hour, based on attendance and participation, up to 25 hours each week. Through successful completion of the training, participants will receive a certificate in Emergency Medical Services and qualify to take the EMT certification exam.

According to the state Department of Employment and Economic Development's 2006 projections, the need for EMTs and paramedics was expected to grow nearly 18 percent in the next decade. A 2008 Longitudinal Emergency Medical Technician Attributes & Demographics Study found that only 28 percent of EMTs and paramedics are women and less than 25 percent are people of color nationwide.

"The academy is the start of a new beginning that will have a generational impact for many Saint Paul families," said Luz Maria Frias, Director of Saint Paul's Department of Human Rights and Equal Economic Opportunity (HREEO). "Many partners made this happen, and through their support, young adults in Saint

Paul have access to a new career and our community's economic capacity is strengthened."

Financial support for this initiative was secured from The Saint Paul Foundation, F.R. Bigelow Foundation, Greater Twin Cities United Way, and The Otto Bremer Foundation as well as Allina Medical Transport, Fire Fighters United of Saint Paul, the Fire Supervisors Association and the Saint Paul NAACP. In addition, Saint Paul City Councilmembers Melvin Carter, Kathy Lantry, Russ Stark and Pat Harris each designated a portion of their COPP funds to make the academy possible.

As part of Mayor Coleman's education initiative, the Emergency Medical Services Academy extends to older students and young adults workforce development and job skills training opportunities outside of the traditional classroom. With the health care sector representing one of the largest employment growth areas in the city, the academy is opening doors to living wage jobs for young adults growing up and living in Saint Paul.

Participants for the fall Academy have been selected and will begin classes September 16th.

For more information on the EMS Academy, visit: <http://www.ehs.net/emsacademy>.

footer