

Sparkles the Fire Safety Dog

"We love you, Sparkles!" has been echoed by thousands of young children since Sparkles came into Firefighter Dayna Hilton's life May 2003. Sparkles was adopted from the Dalmatian Assistance League in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Previously, Sparkles lived a challenging life, and was rescued from a home with 62 other dogs.

Since moving to Arkansas, Sparkles has become an invaluable member of Johnson County RFD #1's Fire Safety Team in Clarksville. Sparkles, and her adopted friend, Spanner, have assisted department's firefighters with hundreds of fire safety programs on the local, state, and national level. Sparkles and Spanner have come a long way since their days before adoption. They have participated in a Congressional briefing in Washington, DC, helped deliver fire safety tips on *PBS KIDS Sprout* (now on *Sprout On Demand*) and online at www.sproutonline.com/firesafety, and have appeared on *FOX and Friends* in New York City as well as numerous stations throughout the Midwest and South.

Sparkles has been highly involved in all aspects of RFD #1's fire safety program. One program highlight is the *Reading with Sparkles* project. Initiated in 2004, firefighters and Fire Corps members read fire safety books once a week to kindergarten and first grade classes at Clarksville Primary School.

The *Reading with Sparkles* project allows the department to measure what fire safety messages children have retained since exposure to previous fire safety presentations. After a fire safety related book is read to the children, they are asked specific fire safety questions based on previous programming. The educator then spends time focusing on those messages that need



Sparkles Bio continued...

reinforcement. Not only do the children enjoy a book, he or she learns about fire safety in a fun way. The reward for sitting quietly is a special Sparkles fire safety sticker and the opportunity to pet her at the end of the session.

Another benefit of the *Reading with Sparkles* project is that it provides motivation for children to read. At the conclusion of reading the book, each child is given a drawing of Sparkles without her spots. The boy or girl is told that after reading a book of his or her choice, he or she can draw a spot for each book read. When the child draws a total of five spots or more, he or she is given a special Sparkles bookmark by his/her teacher.

Sparkle's has recently become the star of the new children's fire safety book and audio book, *Sparkles the Fire Safety Dog*, available from Firehouse Dog Publishing.

To learn more about Sparkles, visit her website at www.sparklesthefiresafetydog.com.

I ♥
SPARKLES