



CITY OF HARRISONBURG  
**FIRE**  
DEPARTMENT

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## All-Girls Camp Sparks Interest in Future Careers as Firefighters

HARRISONBURG, Va. – One of the most unique summer camps around is gearing up for another fantastic year, and there’s still time to apply.

The Harrisonburg Fire Department (HFD) and Rockingham County Fire and Rescue (RCFR) will host their fifth annual girl’s day camp, called Camp L.I.T. (Leadership, Integrity, Trailblazer), this summer from July 17 to 21. The free camp is open to young women between the ages of 14 and 17 years old who will receive insight into life as a first responder with the goal of encouraging more young women to consider the fire service as a viable career option.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, “there are 1.16 million firefighters in the United States, but only 7 percent are women.” One of the camp’s goals is to help change this statistic and encourage young women to become firefighters – something Camp L.I.T. accomplishes by letting participants work first hand with many of the women leaders with HFD.

Camp L.I.T. is an unforgettable experience for both campers and instructors. The five-day camp includes activities such as physical training, fire simulations and hands-on experience. Instructors cover a variety of topics throughout the week such as use of fire gear, fire prevention, CPR certification, search and rescue, mental health awareness, fire behavior and more.

However, Camp L.I.T. is so much more than a fire/rescue camp, says HFD Lieutenant Erin Stehle: “it is an opportunity for young women to focus on empowerment, team building, communication and self-confidence, which will help them succeed in all aspects of their lives.”

Camp L.I.T.’s success goes beyond the Valley. Since its inception, Camp L.I.T. has had more than 10 former campers pursue more fire/rescue certifications and training, serve as volunteers or pursue a career in a first responder-related field.



Camp L.I.T. is a true testament to the amazing partnerships HFD and RCFR have in the region. In addition to fire/rescue, participants will be introduced to other careers in emergency services, including flight nurses and paramedics, emergency communicators and police officers.

“Making sure that women are represented more in the fire service, and at all levels of public safety, is vital to ensuring we represent those in the community that we serve, that we are mindful of the needs and perspectives of all individuals, and that our organization and others like ours have the possibility of growing and improving thanks to the involvement of many different people with different life experiences,” HFD Chief Matthew Tobia said. “Camp L.I.T. is just one of the ways we are looking to accomplish this, and I’m so proud of the efforts not only of those who make this event happen every year, but the young women who come and grow their leadership skills with us. I’m excited to see where they go from here and what insight they bring to the fire service in the future.”

Applications can be found at [www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire) and are open until Thursday, June 1.

***The Harrisonburg Fire Department** is an ISO-Class II All-Hazards agency providing essential emergency and non-emergency life safety services to the public who live, work and travel in Harrisonburg. More information about the Fire Department is available on-line at [www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire) or on Facebook®, Twitter® and Instagram®.*

*The **City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 55,700 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is available online at [www.HarrisonburgVA.gov](http://www.HarrisonburgVA.gov).*

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