

# Firefighter's ABCs / Internship Testimonials

*"...Although I did not realize my dream of becoming a member of the fire service everything I learned as an Intern under the guidance of Recruit Officer Russell Hayden for two years was of great value to me in my life and in my own business."*

**Danny Martin – San Jose Fire Department Intern**



*Re: San Jose Fire Department and former Recruitment Officer Russell Hayden*

*I would like to take this opportunity to thank "San Jose Fire Department Internship Program" for the foundation it provided me in achieving my goal as a professional firefighter. I was hired by City of Oakland Fire Department in 2002. The intern program under the direction of Recruit Officer Russell Hayden gave me the chance to learn and guide me through all the phrases of becoming a firefighter. I couldn't have done it without the help of this program.*

*I thank Russell Hayden very much for all of the helpful information and time. In closing, if you choose to have Firefighter's ABCs as a workshop you attend or if your department chooses to hire Firefighter's ABCs to provide a workshop for your department your will receive a highly rated workshop.*

**Dia Thach**

*The San Jose Fire Department Recruitment Internship Program was a great experience. The program allowed me to participate in a wide variety of activities like ride-alongs on fire engines, various building inspections, and many other fire service activities. It allowed me to become more familiar with not only the San Jose Fire Department's day to day operations, but fire service operations in general. The program also helped prepare me both physically and mentally for a career in the fire service. The lessons I learned in this program helped me become a member of the Phoenix Fire Department, one of the premier fire department's in the nation, and I will continue to draw on those experiences throughout my career.*

**Kathleen Bateman**  
**Professional Firefighter since 2001**



*Prior to meeting Russell Hayden, I knew very little about the fire service. Through meeting with him I was able to become a part of the San Jose Fire Department Recruitment Internship Program, which he was the head of. This program allowed me the opportunity to learn about the fire service from an inside prospective. He familiarized me and helped me understand not only the line personnel duties, but also the administrative side of the fire service, giving me a broader understanding in general. I believe this helped me become a better candidate as well as a better firefighter today. He helped guide me through each process of becoming a firefighter from the initial testing process up to the day I was given a badge. Within a year of meeting Russell Hayden, I was hired with the San Jose Fire Department. Working with Russell Hayden directly helped me get to where I am today.*

**Robert Tran**  
**Professional Firefighter since 2000**

*I'm Ronald Johnson Jr. At the age of 14 I joined the San Jose Fire Department Explorer Post. That's how I got in contact with Russell Hayden. At the time he was spearheading an internship program and recruiting quality firefighters for the department. Though I was obviously too young to join the Internship program, he still assisted me in making realistic goals and practical ways to accomplish them.*

*To prove my point, by 18, I completed E.M.T. school. By 19, I completed Paramedic school. By 20, I was hired with the Oakland Fire Department as a FF/Paramedic. And at 23 I completed my promotional training and I am currently working as an Engineer.*

*One of the first things he taught me was to be the best that you can be, but be better than the best. That has guided me throughout my entire life.*

*Russell was different in another way. He also taught that the Fire Service is a lot larger than the Fire Department. It involves all the various aspects and dynamics of a particular city, or area. For example, the Police Department, board members, individual organizations and so forth. Having knowledge of these things will build on your qualification of the ideal firefighter candidate.*

*Even though he may not be the easiest person to follow instruction from, I credit nothing more as the primary prep tool to getting into the Fire Service than listening and applying what Russell Hayden has to offer.*

**Ronald Johnson Jr.**  
**Oakland Fire Department**

*... I learned a lot from Russell Hayden. Much of what I owe to my career in the fire service is due in part to the advice, mentorship and support provided during my time as a San Jose Fire Department Intern.*

*I began pursuing my career as a Firefighter by visiting fire stations and asking questions. I later participated in a program which prepared me for the fire fighting written exam, physical agility and the oral board process. I also took a class and successfully became an Emergency Medical Technician.*

*While pursuing my career as a Firefighter, I had the opportunity to be mentored by Recruit Officer Russell Hayden through the San Jose Recruitment Intern Program as well as attended the course he developed called The ABCs of Becoming a Firefighter. During the time of volunteering as a Recruitment Intern, Russell had core responsibilities for the Interns which included being professional, having an above standard work ethic, respecting Firefighters' and their rank and he encouraged us to take as many fire entrance exams as possible. We were frequently involved in assisting Firefighters' with their daily station duties, community activities and rode a long on basic emergency calls.*

*Recruit Officer Russell Hayden was an incredible adviser and motivator. His support had a positive influence along with volunteering as a Recruitment Intern for me to have successfully become a Professional Firefighter Paramedic.*

*Thereafter, I still was able to gain valuable knowledge regarding entry and promotion within the fire service through my ongoing contact with Russell G. Hayden, CEO – Firefighter's ABC's.*

*Yes joining the Firefighter's ABCs Online Internship Program is worth your time and the effort placed in completing your monthly task will one day pay off.*

**La Shon Polk**  
**Firefighter Paramedic**  
**Fulton County Fire Dept. - Atlanta Georgia**



Dear Russell,

*I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for helping me achieve my goal in becoming a firefighter.*

*When I was your intern in the San Jose Fire Department, I appreciated the opportunities I had through your internship program. Through the program, I was able to do ride-a-longs with the engine companies, fire inspectors and “sit-a-longs” with fire dispatchers. I had the opportunity to talk to many firefighters about their job and responsibilities and what it would take to get hired.*

*You gave me knowledge of how to become a better candidate. With this understanding, I was able to score high on my oral interviews and eventually get hired as a firefighter.*

*After obtaining my EMT certificate, Firefighter I academy training and becoming a San Jose Fire Department Intern, I started applying to about 30 different fire departments. It took me about 2 years to get hired and during that time, I applied to approximately 30 different fire departments. I was probably taking a written fire exam every other month and near the end of the 2 years, I was getting an oral interview every 2 weeks. At one point, I had 3 oral interviews in a two week period; Tracy Fire, Milpitas Fire and San Jose Fire Department. I eventually received offers from all three departments.*

*I remember in your “ABCs of Becoming a Firefighter Workshop,” you mentioned, “You should be doing something EVERYDAY in helping yourself achieve your goal in getting hired.” I truly believed in the advice that you gave and I am proud to say it was one of the reasons for my success.*

*Thank you for your help in guiding me through the hiring process and teaching me what it takes to become a firefighter.*

Sincerely,

**Eric Kwan**

**Tracy Fire Dept – San Jose Fire Dept – San Francisco Fire Dept**

[www.FirefightersABCs.com](http://www.FirefightersABCs.com)

