

## Mark's Determination

When Mark was ten years old, he visited a fire station with his uncle. It was then that he decided to become a firefighter. Even when people told him it was hard to get into firefighting, Mark never changed his mind. For two years, his older cousin Jake applied to become a firefighter with no success, but Mark was firm about his choice.

During his junior year in high school, Mark heard about a training course for firefighters. He learned where it was held, then he visited the program and talked to the instructor. After the visit, Mark was more sure than ever that he wanted to be a firefighter. The instructor, Mr. Danson, told him about the training program. The training lasted one year. Mark could complete the program as a senior or wait for graduation. If he took the course now, he would go three nights a week and Saturdays.

Mr. Danson also told Mark about jobs in firefighting. He said that firefighting is a popular career for young men. In fact, a huge number of people apply for every open position. Those with training and volunteer experience are more likely to be hired. Mr. Danson told Mark about the Explorers volunteer program. He said it was a good idea to volunteer at a local fire station.

Mark contacted the fire chief at a station four miles from his house. He started volunteering in the Explorer program the summer before his senior year. He volunteered twice a week and became acquainted with all of the firefighters. Mark was always on time and did what they asked. He continued to volunteer during his senior year. The firefighters began to rely on him.

In his senior year, Mark signed up for the firefighting training course. He would start the course right after graduation and finish in a year. He attended training classes Monday through Friday from 7:30 to 12:00 noon. Mark also worked part-time at a local store. He even took an English class at the community college to improve his English skills. After he started the training course, he talked to Mr. Danson about getting a job in a local firehouse. Mr. Danson said it would be hard but he could do it.

First, Mark had to finish the course. Then he had to pass the state exam to get on the list for new hires. Once he was on the list, he would have to apply for every open firefighting position.



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Mr. Danson told Mark it would take a long time to find a job. There would be older, more experienced people applying for jobs. Mr. Danson told him to choose the firehouse where he wanted to work and become a volunteer. Once he was 18, he could work part time as a volunteer if the firehouse was busy. Volunteering at a firehouse would show the fire chief his skills. This would give Mark a chance when a position opened up.

After his training, Mark visited all of the fire stations within one hundred miles of his home. He talked with firefighters at each station. He learned how each station was run. As he met each fire chief, he thought about working for that person.

After visiting 15 stations, Mark decided on a station about 30 miles away. It was busy and had 20 firefighters on staff. The fire chief ran an efficient station. Everyone there respected him. Mark noticed that everyone got along well. They had a good relationship with the chief.

It was important to Mark to work in a place where everyone got along and respected each other. Mark applied for a volunteer position. He was hired because of his training.

Mark was one of the best volunteers they had ever had. He worked extra hours for no pay. He was always one of the first firefighters to reach a fire or an emergency. Mark got along well with

everyone. He wasn't afraid to do extra work. Mark told the chief that he would like to get a full-time position at the station and that he really liked working for him.

He asked the chief for advice about getting a full-time position. After Mark had volunteered for five months, a job opened. Mark applied but didn't get the job. This happened several times over the next year. Luckily, Mark didn't give up. He continued to volunteer and worked part time at an auto parts store.

His persistence paid off. Mark landed the exact job he wanted when he was 21 years old. It took two years of volunteering and sticking to his commitment. He didn't give up, even when his family asked him how long he was going to wait. Most people were still in school or drifting from job to job.

When his younger brother asked him how he how to become a firefighter, Mark told him that he had to decide what he wanted and then go for it. Mark is a successful firefighter because he took control of his future.

First, he decided on a career. Then he looked at his options. Next, he chose where he wanted to work. He kept working hard to get the job he wanted.



## Go for that Job!

Answer the following questions:

1. What did Mark do to get his job as a firefighter? Use the ideas below and add the steps Mark took to get his job:
  - a. Decided he wanted to be a firefighter
  - b.
  - c.
  - d. Took the firefighter training course.
  - e.
  - f.
  - g. Let the fire chief know he wanted a job
  - h.
2. Why did Mark volunteer at the local station during his senior year?
3. How did Mark find the fire station where he wanted to work?
4. What did he look for in a place to work?
5. Why did Mark keep applying for firefighter jobs?
6. What would you have done differently to get a job as a firefighter?
7. Why do you think it is important to choose the place where you want to work instead of taking anything that is available?