

2016 SEP 26 PM 2:20

1370 Manucy Road  
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034  
September 23, 2016

Chief Matthew Graves  
96160 Nassau Pl.,  
Yulee, FL 32097

Dear Chief Graves:

This letter is to express appreciation for the extraordinary actions of one of your firefighters, CARL NISHIYAMA, from Rescue 20 on Amelia Island. Late in the evening of September 8, Firefighter Nishiyama kindly and capably came to our rescue and while it was not the usual type of rescue that firefighters are famous for, it was a rescue and truly life-saving at that.

Molly, our 7 year old dog, a shelter rescue sheltie-corgi mix, went missing for several hours until we realized she had managed to crawl through a small opening under our deck hearing her faint cries around midnight and determined that she was trapped under the boards in a confined space, unable to get out with us unable to get in to free her. She remained trapped for hours with us unable to break through the boards to get to her. All of our efforts were unsuccessful as her cries became increasingly faint as time passed. We lacked the equipment & the expertise to extract the frightened & increasingly weakened, dehydrated trapped animal and while some may have seen her as "only a dog" she was a much-loved family member all the same. Not knowing where else to turn we turned to the nearest Fire Station, Rescue 20, for help. We knew this wasn't in the job description for firefighters, but we had nowhere else to turn. The image of a kindly fireman on a ladder rescuing a cat from a tree seemed like a Norman Rockwell painting from the 1950s, but we knew it was unlikely that such a warm-your-heart rescue could actually take place in 2016 but knocked on the door of the fire station all the same, hoping someone might be able to offer a solution to our dilemma. Firefighter Nishiyama came to the door despite the lateness of the hour (1:30 AM) and patiently listened to our problem, nodded knowingly & offered that the fact that Molly was a canine did not make her any less a member of the family than if she were human. Sensing our desperation, he checked with the Lieutenant and was given permission to use the utility truck to come to our residence to see what he might be able to do. What he was able to do was simply amazing as he pried the boards off without having to break them and did so quickly knowing how weakened the pup had become after many hours trapped under the deck. We reached in, lifted her up and out, none the worse for the wear despite being frightened, dirty and a bit dehydrated. She seemed instinctively to recognize Carl as her rescuer—as did we. It may not have been a high profile life-or-death rescue but Firefighter Nishiyama did in fact save a life that evening and we will forever be grateful to him for his hard work and his gentle heart in taking pity on us in our moment of need and in the tradition of firefighters coming to the rescue, he rescued not only our Molly but us as well. He even restored the boards that had been pried off and hammered the nails to secure them without even a splinter damaged in the process. We asked what we could do to thank him. He said he was glad to help and that thanks weren't necessary. We don't agree. Thanks are necessary. This letter is one small attempt at thanking Firefighter Nishiyama & his Lieutenant & every firefighter manning the stations in our area, ready to help out in a crisis of any kind, even one as seemingly trivial as ours. To Carl, it wasn't trivial at all.

  
Robert Reid and Georgia Kelly