



## Eric says EMT job is a dream come true



If anyone could make a career out of being an Emergency Medical Technician, it's Eric Cassidy.

"This job is the bomb. I walk away from work every day totally fulfilled," he smiles, noting his split job description at Lincoln Hospital is the first officially of its kind. Though he may seem like a humble stocking clerk from Central Supply, look closely. He's wearing a beeper and is ready to drop everything at a moment's notice to hit the road as an EMT.

"I'm on call Tuesday through Saturday with the ambulance and work in supply while I wait for calls," he explains. "Because the ambulance crew is made up of volunteers — people who work 9-5 jobs — day shift the hardest to fill. That and weekends."

That's why Eric's job covers both.

"I like the schedule. Monday is a great day to shop and the lift lines are short so it's the perfect day off." He also loves the job.

"When I was a kid I loved the show 'Emergency' with Johnny Gage and Roy DeSoto as paramedics — you know, 'Squad 51, squad 51. This is Rampart.' That's where it all started."

The front lines of trauma care may have been exciting on TV, but Eric has found that real life emergencies are even more so.

"I admit it. I'm an adrenaline junkie," he smiles of the rush he gets the minute his beeper goes off. "When I first became an EMT here in Davenport, I went on a few really interesting calls. I was immediately addicted. It's a pretty awesome thing to bring comfort, direction and hope to someone on what's perhaps the worst day of their life."

Not only does Eric enjoy being there for those in critical need, but he got his start in healthcare providing people with those small, everyday necessities.

"My mom was doing home health care and I had been working for a collection agency. She got me started doing chore care for the elderly — cooking, cleaning, running errands and doing yard work." His clientele grew and so did his desire to help people. "One day, Jenny Cate suggested I take the EMT course. I thought about it for about a second. It made sense."

And working in Central Supply makes sense as well.

"It's awesome," laughs Eric. "It's a backstage pass to how a hospital runs. You really get a chance to see how it all comes together from the ambulance call, to the ER, to surgery, lab, radiology and acute care. The entire patient care chain just all comes together."

Which, this DHS grad says, makes him a better EMT.

"It's pretty amazing, scary, and even empowering to have this medical knowledge — just enough to keep someone alive to get them to a doctor. It's a huge responsibility. From the point of arrival on the scene until you get to the ER, it's just you, your crew and God."

And sometimes, every trick in the book doesn't help.

"You have to accept that you can't save everyone. We give the best we have to offer and leave the rest to God. If you want to be part of the community and make a real difference in people's lives, be an EMT. It's the ultimate in job satisfaction."