

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Having emergency and seeing double? It's Diane and Dawn

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Diane Ray and Dawn Ray both carry stethoscopes, ride in ambulances and sport LEMSAs patches on their crisp, white shirts.

The animated, 32-year-old twin sisters look alike. They talk alike. They say they even sometimes think alike.

"A lot of times," Diane says, "we will finish each other's sentences."

Small wonder that people often get them confused.

"A lot of emergency room staff thought for a long time that there was only one of us," Dawn says. "In the entire county, we're the only identical twins we know of" in emergency medical service.

This week, the twins will observe national EMS Week, an event sponsored by the American College of Emergency Physicians to publicize safety and honor those who save lives daily at accident and fire scenes and during medical emergencies.

But the women's passion for making ambulance calls goes way back.

Dawn became interested in first responder work through her sister, Michele, a former emergency medical technician.

Diane got the bug from Dawn,

who became an EMT in 1993 and joined the former East Lampeter Ambulance in 1995.

Diane, who has an associate's degree in architectural drafting from Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology, has been an EMT since 1995. She started "running" with the former West End Ambulance in 1997.

Both ambulance services merged with LEMSAs, the Lancaster Emergency Medical Services Association, in the late 1990s.

Diane is studying to be a paramedic and will complete her year-long schooling at the Reading Hospital in October.

Both women have received LEMSAs scholarships for paramedic training.

LEMSAs employs 120 people and operates six stations, but the sisters have occasionally served on the same ambulance since Dawn completed her paramedic apprenticeship this past winter.

There, the twins' identities are as plain to see as the tags on their uniforms.

"I always call her Di," Dawn says.

"Our niece calls me Di-Di," Diane says.

"And I've been nicknamed Dawn-Dawn," Dawn adds.

Background: Raised in Quarryville, the twins graduated from Solanco High School in 1991. Both



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Twin sisters Diane, left, and Dawn Ray are on call at LEMSAs.

volunteered with the Quarryville Community Ambulance Association before becoming paid EMTs.

Family status: Single.

When I was growing up I wanted to be: (Dawn) A nurse or a teacher. (Diane) I always wanted to do something in art.

The best part of my job: (Dawn) Seeing patients get better. (Diane) Just making a difference in someone's health.

One benefit of working with your twin: (Diane) When we run together we never say too much. She trained me. I know how she runs because she taught me that way. Other providers say we run a lot alike.

Best ways to tell them apart: (Diane) I'm more sensitive but I can be more aggressive. (Dawn) The braces. I've had them for a little over a year.

My role model was: (Diane) My mom. She was a single parent rais-

ing four kids on her own.

A cause I support: (Diane) Relay for Life, (a fund-raiser for the American Cancer Society). (Dawn) Our older sister, Michele, has cancer.

The most stressful part of my job: (Dawn) We can be very busy ... with a limited number of hands to get the job done. (Diane) Dealing with family (members during an emergency).

When I really want to relax: (Dawn) I do folk art painting. (Diane) Travel and scrap booking. I've been to Hawaii, California, Florida, St. Croix and the Caribbean. The warm places, pretty much. I don't like the cold weather.

My favorite music: (Dawn) Classic rock. (Diane) And country.

What I like best about Lancaster County: (Dawn) The historical side. (Diane) The culture. You can go from city to country in 10 or 15 minutes. ■