You see the bumper stickers all over suburbia: “The family that plays together stays together.” However, if a Drummond fire engine sported a bumper sticker, it might read: “The family that fights fires together can stand the heat.” Or if that fire engine had a stick-family bumper sticker, it would represent 30 percent for the Drummond Volunteer Fire Department. That’s because the Jerome clan has made firefighting a family affair.

According to WITC’s fire training specialist, Mike Herrmann, it’s not uncommon for children to follow in their parent’s fire-fighting footsteps. In Drummond, there is no shortage of Jerome boot prints to follow. The latest to don the gear are twin sisters Rachelle and Rebecca, mom Diane and cousin Cassidy. They join Chuck, the twins’ father and captain of the ambulance; uncle Mark, department chief; grandpa Del, a former chief who has been on the department for 47 years; and cousin Tyler, who is still on the roster while serving in the Air Force. That’s three generations of Jeromes volunteering side by side for the benefit of their community.

“We’ve been around fire trucks since before we could walk,” Rachelle says. “We’re really comfortable in the fire hall and around all the equipment. It’s something that we always knew we would do one day.”

Chuck, who had also grown up around the fire hall when his father Del was chief, suspected his daughters would join, but he didn’t want to push them. “All of a sudden a spark was ignited, and they even talked their mother into joining,” he says.

But, as Rebecca explains, getting mom on board was more of a practical matter. “We needed to have 10 or 11 to start the class. Mom wasn’t going to do it in the beginning, but we needed a few more people,” Rebecca says of an entry-level class taken through WITC. The twins and their cousin Cassidy had signed up for the class to be able to join the department. They talked their mother and another woman into joining the class simply to fill out the roster. In the end though, both women joined the department as well.

“Half the time, we don’t go in the fire,” Rebecca says. “The rule, if there’s a lot to lose then you can give a little. But if there’s nobody in the building, we don’t go in the building. We fight it from the outside.”

Although some might assume that the possibility of 20-year-old twins being placed in harm’s way would affect the decisions made by the chief and captains, the Jeromes take it in stride. Even though only seven within the department bear the Jerome name, they’re really all one big family that looks out for one another.

“Everybody is close,” Chuck says. “Everybody looks out for everybody else.”

Even in their regular, day-to-day life, the Jeromes are tightknit. The twins attended WITC-Ashland together last year. Rachelle graduated with an office support specialist technical diploma in December 2011, and Rebecca will graduate in May with an administrative professional associate degree. Older sister Christine earned the medical administrative specialist degree from WITC-Superior and Danielle is currently enrolled in the nursing program. Younger sisters Alyssa and Lexi are still in high school and may continue the legacies of joining the fire department and attending WITC. Whatever they decide, it’s a sure bet they’ll have their family’s support. As Rebecca says, “We try to do everything as a family.”

“Public Safety and Emergency Services

A career in public safety means protecting and serving the public. These brave individuals are often the first on the scene when someone needs help. A full range of specialized training is available at WITC. From emergency medical, fire, and law enforcement, these courses and in-services will focus on a specific set of skills required to enhance the ability to perform under the most serious conditions.

For more information on WITC’s public safety and emergency services, visit witc.edu/continuing-education/publicsafety.htm.