



From left: Ashlie with Bradenton Police Major William Tokajer and Mayor Poston; at the Mayor's desk; and with Fire Chief Mark Souders

## Take Your Teacher To Work Day: Building Stronger Communities

Wakeland Elementary first grade teacher Ashlie Fulmer strives to fully engage her students and keep education fresh and exciting. Always open to innovative ideas and new opportunities, Ashlie was intrigued with the idea of participating in *Take Your Teacher To Work Day*. After brainstorming about where she would like to go and what would best suit her students' needs, Ashlie set her plan into motion. She wanted to incorporate her experience with the class's *Me on the Map* and *Community Helpers* units. In these units, students learn about where they live and go to school, who is in charge, and who serves their neighborhood and national communities. Armed with background research, Ashlie contacted Bradenton's very own esteemed Mayor Wayne Poston who welcomed the idea. Ashlie set out for City Hall, the police, and fire departments!

Ashlie began her day at City Hall where she observed a city council meeting. She was seated to the left of Mayor Poston and surrounded by the five councilpersons. News cameras started rolling and the Mayor called the well-attended meeting to order. The first order of new business was the heartwarming responsibility to honor the Bradenton Police Department's Officer of the Month. Then for the next several hours, citizens from all over town presented their needs and concerns. Topics ranged from housing development issues to children and educational concerns as well as future planning needs. Ashlie watched as City Council members acted with compassion, concern, and care. They portrayed a sense of enjoying their jobs, each other, and the opportunity to serve their community's citizens. Before Ashlie left, Mayor Poston made plans to visit her first grade class where he will read a story and answer questions with the students.

After lunch, Ashlie joined Major William Tokajer of the Bradenton Police Department. She toured the building and observed the police dispatcher in action, spoke with detectives working at their desks, and took a close look at the interrogation room. Then it was time to meet Bradenton's Fire Chief, Mark Souders. Chief Souders escorted Ashlie on a tour of the firehouse where she saw emergency vehicles, lots of equipment, and very organized gear. She saw the enormous industrial kitchen where firefighters prepare their meals and the bunkers where they hope to catch a few zzz's between calls. The firefighters were busy analyzing a map and floor plan of a recent house fire call, part of their weekly training requirements. Ashlie realized that there are many parallels between the people serving their community and educators. They are both involved with accountability and training, both must stay abreast of technological advances, and must find the resources to be able to do so.

At the end of the day, Ashlie felt uplifted and reenergized from this truly wonderful experience. With many fabulous recollections and lots of pictures, Ashlie couldn't wait to return to the classroom and create an I-movie (slide show) that she could incorporate into the *Me on the Map* and *Community Helpers* units. The Mayor, the policemen, the firefighters, and even soldiers (two of Ms. Fulmer's students have dad's serving in the Armed Forces and came to class wearing full dress uniforms) are all people who help build strong communities and serve our citizens for the common good of all.