

# Unsung Heroes

*B.A.D.G.E. of FCSO gives back to the people who keep our community safe.*

**By Kim Williamson**

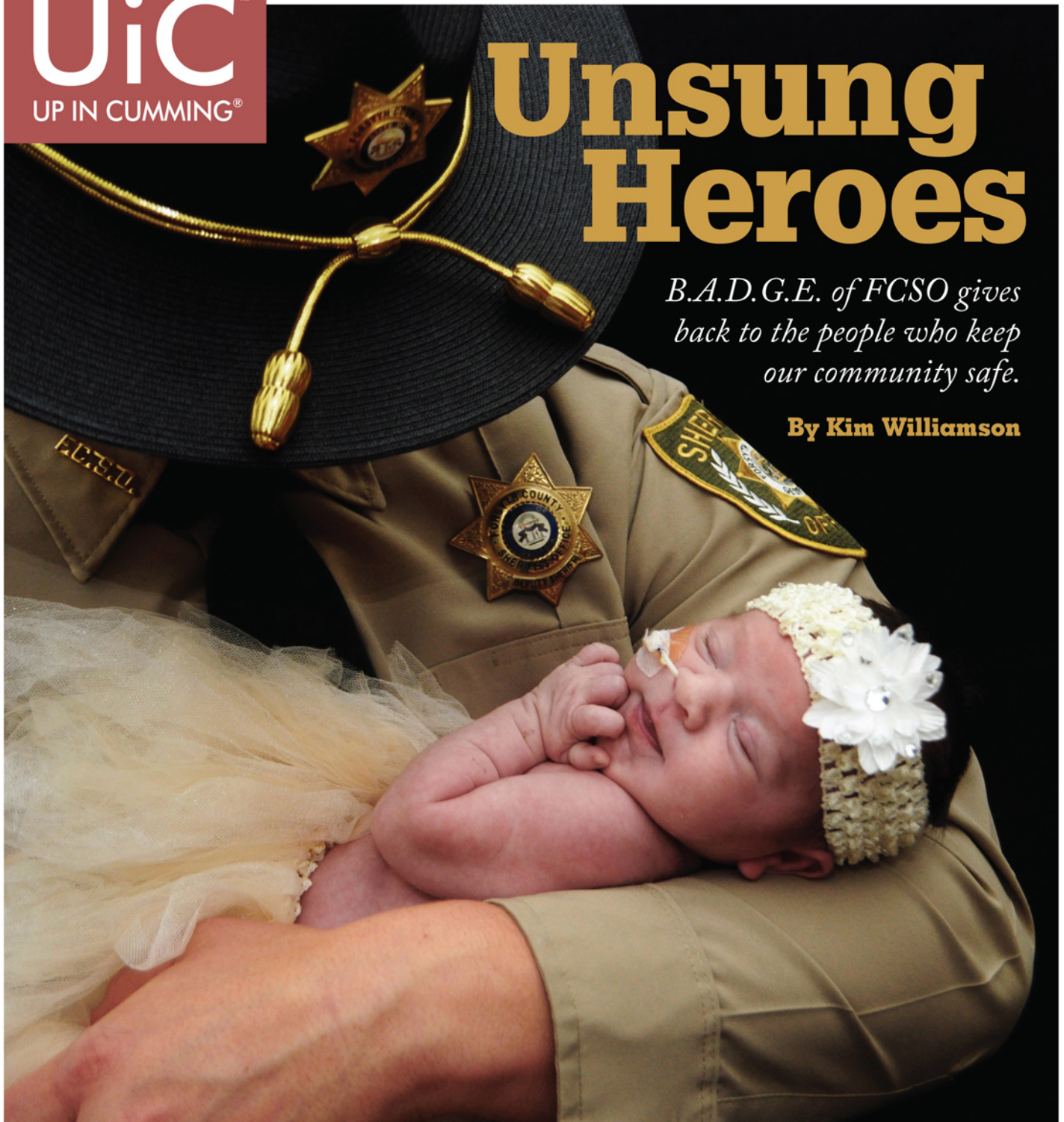


Photo by Ashely Cook Photography

**P**ublic servant . . . as an employee within the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) that is the role you assume. It's the commitment and the promise you make and live every day. But who is there when the tables are turned?

On June 6, 2014, Forsyth County made national headlines when a man heavily armed with both guns and explosives attempted an attack on the courthouse in downtown Cumming. FCSO Deputy Daniel Rush was the first person to engage the gunman. Many other FCSO deputies came on the scene quickly and contained the situation with skill and efficiency, ultimately shooting the gunman and saving many innocent lives. Deputy Rush was shot that day and during his recovery, many members of Forsyth community generously made do-

nations to help Rush and his family.

Every day, whether it's a high-profile case like the courthouse shooting or just a standard traffic violation, the men and women of FCSO put their lives at risk. For example, two years ago, a sheriff's deputy was hit by a car during a routine assignment, directing traffic. As expected, he incurred medical expenses and lost time from work during his recovery. So when this type of hardship occurs, who is there to help?

Meet B.A.D.G.E. of FCSO — the Benevolent Association Dedicated to Giving to Employees of Forsyth County Sheriff's Office. Founded a little over a year ago, B.A.D.G.E. of FCSO was founded by several dedicated civilians wanting to give back to the people who keep our community safe. As one person





# B.A.D.G.E.

**BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION DEDICATED to GIVING to EMPLOYEES  
of Forsyth County Sheriff's Office**

involved in the initial formation of B.A.D.G.E. of FCSO explained, “These people put their lives on the line every day. They protect our community, but when they’re the ones in need, it’s not in their nature to ask for help.”

It’s natural to question the need for a group like B.A.D.G.E. of FCSO. After all, insurance, disability, worker’s compensation — isn’t that why these benefits exist? However, if you’ve ever had a life-changing event such as a medical situation, fire, accident, or illness in your family, you understand that there are limits and plenty of red tape. Medical insurance covers a percentage of the costs, worker’s compensation claims take time, disability pay requires time to process. Add to this the fact that so many of our law enforcement men and women are the main breadwinners for single income families. Why? When the dad or mom works an erratic, unpredictable schedule, their spouse needs to be the constant — the person who manages the household, the family, the kids’ schedules and more. Additionally, a hardship can put financial strain on any family, but this is especially true for local government employees; after all, you don’t choose a career in law enforcement for the lavish salary. Rather, these men and women enter this vocation because it is a calling for them.

Made up of a board of local community members, B.A.D.G.E. of FCSO exists to help those who protect and serve us every day. Some little known facts about this organization include:

- B.A.D.G.E. of FCSO fills a much-needed void at the Sheriff’s office because the FCSO is not able to accept financial donations. For example, a Forsyth resident who wanted to help Deputy Rush during his recovery would not have been able to walk in and write a check or make a monetary donation to assist him.
- B.A.D.G.E. of FCSO is an IRS-recognized 501(c)3, paving a clear, accountable and tax-free way to help.
- B.A.D.G.E. eliminates the need for personal funds like GoFundMe.com that can be well — intentioned but at times not monitored and sometimes fraudulent.
- B.A.D.G.E. is non-partisan and exists to help all those in need at the FCSO.
- A FCSO employee does not need to be on the frontline to receive a contribution. Everyone in the Sheriff’s Office plays

**B.A.D.G.E is continually striving to do more — in fact, next year, they plan to increase their programs, offering scholarship opportunity to FCSO deputies and their families.**

an integral role in keeping our community safe and is eligible for B.A.D.G.E. help.

B.A.D.G.E. is comprised solely of volunteers and relies on individual and corporate donations as well as local fundraisers — such as the October 2015 golf tournament that raised over \$35,000 in net proceeds for B.A.D.G.E. Any person making a donation can request how they want their funds allocated, such as the K-9 unit or water patrol. Additionally, anyone in the community can request assistance for a FCSO employee, based on a demonstrated need. Local business owner and community leader, Bill Howell, leads the B.A.D.G.E Board of Directors and as Howell humbly says, “Our mission statement says it all; B.A.D.G.E. of FCSO is truly passionate about helping those who protect and serve our community. As families continue to flock to Forsyth County because of our people and our community, it’s important to remember and support the men and women who help us sustain the life we live. “

Still in its infancy as far as non-profits go, this group has made great strides in a short amount of time. One recipient said, “. . . B.A.D.G.E. was able to help my family and I through an unexpected financial hardship. It is wonderful to know there is help out there if you need it.” Another family recalled “We had unplanned medical bills, extended time off work . . ., and the expenses of traveling [between a hospital and our family]. The love that B.A.D.G.E. [showed] us has not gone unnoticed and will forever remain in our hearts.”

But it doesn’t stop there. B.A.D.G.E is continually striving to do more — in fact, next year, they plan to increase their programs, offering scholarship opportunity to FCSO deputies and their families.

Joseph John Campbell, an American writer, once said, “A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself.” Day in and day out, the heroes of the Forsyth County Sheriff’s Office do what many people wouldn’t — and B.A.D.G.E of FCSO supports them every step of the way. Consider being a part of this worthy cause and make an impact in our community!

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*For more info, visit [www.badgeoffcso.org](http://www.badgeoffcso.org) or *BADGE of FCSO* on Facebook.*