

## BUSINESS LIFE



Stephanie Teague, a supervising paramedic with AMR, sits down with her husband, Jason, 15-year-old stepson Mitchell, 10-year-old daughter Miranda and baby Stephen for dinner. Teague is a longtime paramedic used to putting in 12-hour shifts and making time for her family. She was recently put in charge of AMR's special events division.

# FAMILY CIRCUS

Balancing work and family is as stressful today as it's ever been

**P**aramedic Stephanie Teague's phone rings during an interview. Its ring tone sounds like someone saying "911 emergency." Instead of racing off to save a life, she answers a call from her stepson. He's having trouble thawing hamburger meat for the family's supper.

After telling the teen she'll call him back, Teague — who was recently promoted to head up an entire special events division at American Medical Response — goes on to recount some of the many challenges she and her husband face rearing four kids. The bunch, ages 15 years to 14 months, is quite a

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STEPHANIE TEAGUE | PARAMEDIC AND MOTHER OF FOUR

handful for the two-parent, two-paramedic team, especially now that Stephanie will have the extra responsibility of supervising some 30 employees at AMR. She already has the experience running a very familiar division:

Besides Mitchell, the 15-year-old burger maestro, there's her 13-year-old stepdaughter Madeline, her 10-year-old daughter Miranda and her youngest, Stephen, or simply "the baby."

Like many other valley workers, Teague and her husband, Jason, have struggled to find a balance between bringing up their children and handling demanding careers. The two have had to juggle teenage angst, sibling rivalry, a preteen identity crises and a new baby all at the same time they respond to car accidents, heart attacks, choking and work standby during rock concerts or other events.

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Dr. Anu Thummala watches husband, Ram, and children, 10-year-old son Tarun and 6-year-old daughter Nikita. Thummala is an oncologist at Comprehensive Cancer Centers of Nevada.

The older children are accustomed to it, by now, she said.

"My daughter (Miranda) is used to me working 12-hour shifts," she said. "She thinks it is completely normal that I work 12 hours and that mommy has met all of these celebrities."

The more glamorous part of Teague's job puts her in contact with people such as Madonna and Robin Williams. Miranda is fond of telling her classmates about her mother's rich-and-famous encounters. But the littlest of the brood, Stephen, is already showing he doesn't like his mom leaving him for so long. The baby makes unhappy faces as Stephanie puts on her uniform.

With both parents putting in shifts amounting to as many as 92 hours a week sometimes, Stephanie Teague praised her oldest children for helping with the cooking and baby-sitting, all the while keeping their grades up.

The children still need their mom, though, Teague said, and teaching her kids skills is a priority as much as being good at her job.

"I want them to know how to cook when they go off to college, and be able to make more than Top Ramen," she said. Single parents may face even more challenges in finding a work-life balance. Larry Monkash, the owner and president of LM Construction, is a twice-divorced father of four children, ages 15, 14, 6 and 4. The businessman has had to rely on the help of his housekeeper/cook/nanny, Nancy, to help him get all the youngsters to school and to day care and back home again.

"She is the wife I don't have," he said in praise of his employee. "She's Wonder Woman."

The children's mothers also cooperate by taking the children if a business trip comes up, or by picking them up from school, Monkash added.

But even with that help, coordinating everything often means two trips back and forth to his house in the morning. Child rearing requires the rescheduling of business appointments and some early-out days so that he can be there for extra curricular activities such as softball camp. After that camp, Monkash devoted his time to answering and sending tons of work e-mails. That's how he makes up for a day he might have to leave the office early.

All of Monkash's children are girls, except the youngest. His oldest daughter ran into problems at school, which required her to be home-schooled. It was then that the developer discovered he had overextended himself. He finally had to hire someone to write the curriculum for his daughter, while he reviewed the homework at night.

Being his own boss has made quite a difference for Monkash in his efforts to

be a good father.

"If I was working for someone else, it would be much more difficult for me to manage," he said.

Attorney Deidre Call has experienced what it is like to raise children while having to work for someone else.

Call, now a transactional attorney with Hutchison & Steffen, has spent her 12-year-career with four different employers, and feels she has now finally found one that shares her family values.

Call has five children ages 14 years to four weeks (Kaitlyn, Kenna, Kaden, Kennedy and Kolton), and works about 30-35 hours per week for the Las Vegas office of the St. Louis-based firm. The lawyer is now on maternity leave.

"At another firm, they let me work part-time, but they wouldn't let me advance," she said.

At Hutchison & Steffen, she will not be blocked from making partner, a goal most attorneys 12 years out of law school have already attained.

Diedre Call's story sounds familiar to Karen Durkin, a business and life coach. The increased number of educated women entering the work force has made for fewer stay-at-home moms. For those female executives who choose to be full-time mothers, the professional toll can be great.

"It's evident when you have all these women taking breaks in their careers to raise kids," Durkin said. "It is tremendously hard. If you go back to work at 50, you might have missed out on some technological advancements. You can focus on raising kids, but there are costs."

But Call said she has no regrets about not climbing the corporate ladder yet. She says there's still time for that. For now, the maternal attorney concentrates on raising her children. Juggling the-law and child-

rearing is not new for Call. She got her first taste of the task's difficulty at a time when most of her peers had nothing more to worry about than the next exam, or who would hire them as a summer clerk.

"I found out two days before starting law school that I was pregnant with my first child," she recalled. "I spent six weeks on bedrest and was cleared to go back to school a few weeks before finals."

Dr. Anu Thummala works full time in her practice at the Comprehensive Cancer Centers of Nevada, making rounds and giving lectures, but also raises her two children, 10-year-old Tarun and 6-year-old Nikita. Thummala works so many hours she can hardly even count them. The workload often starts as early as 6 a.m. and rounds at the hospital end at 7 p.m. or 8 p.m. She saves a few hours at night and most weekends for time with her family.

"Organization is the key," she said, sounding tired after another long day.

Her children help her as much as she helps them. The emotional toll of treating many terminal patients is softened by their presence in her life. "Oncology is very stressful and draining," Thummala said. "You lose (some) cancer patients, and some of them are young. The parents have questions."

The doctor's dedication to her patients will benefit her children in other ways, in spite of the long work hours.

"It's karma," the mother said. "I always say for whatever good I've done, it goes back to my kids."

Durkin cautions working parents not to indulge their children out of guilt, or to think that there will ever be enough time to do everything.

"What I have found is there is no work-life balance," she said.

Contact reporter Valerie Miller at [vmiller@businesspress.com](mailto:vmiller@businesspress.com)