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Katlyn Martin has been working for the Burleson Police Department for less than two years, but she has already made an impression. She was awarded the department's 2013 Civilian Employee of the Year award.

"It's safe to say that I was thoroughly surprised when I heard my name called," Martin, a public safety communications specialist, said. "Knowing that I was not only nominated by my peers but ultimately selected by the chief is a great feeling. I am absolutely ecstatic. I am dedicated to this job simply because I love it, but it's definitely nice to have your hard work recognized."

The 22-year-old Joshua native was hired April 23, 2012. She chose to apply to Burleson because it is close to home and family. "I just felt like this was going to be a great move for me."

According to the nomination letter, Martin "puts forth tremendous effort in all aspects of her job. As one of the newest civilian employees she has quickly proven her ability and dedication to the city. She routinely goes the extra mile and always does more than required or expected of her. She is praised by her co-workers, both sworn and civilian, for her positive attitude and her willingness to do whatever is necessary to fulfill the mission."

In addition to the Civilian Employee of the Year award, Martin earned a lifesaving award for a call she took in October 2013 in which she was able to help a suicidal man. And she and fellow communications specialist Maria Gonzales were commended for the professional way they handled a shots fired call at a home. No one was injured and the shooter was arrested.

When she is asked about a mentor, Martin doesn't hesitate to say Shaun Kellum, who was an officer with Burleson, until recently, when he became a sergeant with the Joshua Police Department.

"He was the first officer to take me on a ride-along and he just showed me what it meant to be part of a law enforcement family," Martin said. "He's had experience on both sides of the microphone so he was able to give me helpful advice from

both an officer's perspective and a dispatcher's perspective. That really impacted the way I look at things now."

Martin is certified as a basic telecommunicator. She earned an associate's degree from Hill College in 2012 and is currently working on a bachelor's degree through the University of Texas at Arlington.

The award winner is an only child but she has "five awesome little cousins ranging in age from two-13 who might as well be my siblings." Her mother is a daycare teacher and her father works in customer service.

"Since I was born both my parents have worked full time to support me," Martin said. "They are definitely the ones who taught me the importance of a strong work ethic and dedication. I'd like to thank them for instilling those traits in me and encouraging me to find a career that I am passionate about and to pursue it to the best of my ability."