

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TOWNSHIP TO RECOGNIZE THREE WHO SAVED A LIFE

Grand Haven Township, Michigan, March 24, 2008.

Michael Stephenson, Asa Carr, and Jim Sherman may not feel like local heroes, but their actions were critical in saving the life of co-worker – Robert Nelson – when Rob suffered cardiac arrest at work last December.

In recognition of their life-saving actions, Grand Haven Charter Township and the American Red Cross presented both a plaque and certificate to the three at the Township Board.

“The story of how Rob’s life was saved is a textbook example of how all of the links in the ‘Chain of Survival’ should work together during an emergency,” Chief Gerencer noted, as he began this survival story.

Rob was unaware that he had any type of heart condition that would cause sudden death. However, on December 10th, 2007 at 11:21 a.m., Rob was standing near a grinder at M&S Tool, talking to Michael Stephenson (Mike) when he suddenly slumped over and fell to the floor.

Mike, with no formal CPR training, quickly assessed Rob’s condition. Mike was unable to

find a pulse and noted that Rob was trying to breathe on his own. Rob's heart had stopped and Mike knew that quick action was necessary.

Asa Carr was returning from the break room when he noticed Mike attending to Rob. Asa had taken a company sponsored CPR class from The American Red Cross and knew the basics of CPR; Asa started respirations while Mike administered chest compressions and Jim Sherman (Jim) helped with an airway.

Meanwhile, at 11:22 a.m., another employee went to a nearby phone and called 911. At 11:23 a.m. Ottawa County Central Dispatch alerted Grand Haven Township Fire/Rescue, NOCH EMS's advanced life support ambulance (ALS), and Ottawa County Sheriff's Department to respond to 17800 172nd Avenue for a "man down". Fire/Rescue responded to the scene within 1 minute and 48 seconds and noted that Mike, Asa, and Jim were doing good CPR on their arrival.

The Fire/Rescue Department and Sheriff's Deputy immediately applied the Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) to Rob's chest, which shocked his heart into a rhythm that would sustain life. At 11:26 a.m. Rob became conscious and was able to answer questions. NOCH EMS arrived two minutes later providing advanced life support and transported Rob to Mercy General Hospital.

Rob was treated at the hospital where a pacemaker and defibrillator were implanted. Rob was discharged from the Hospital four days later and returned home to his wife, Elizabeth, and children, (*i.e., Brad 20, Morgan 16, and Michael 6*). The following Monday, Rob returned to M&S Tool and greeted his life saving team.

"It is estimated that more than 95% of sudden cardiac arrest victims die before reaching a hospital, resulting in approximately 250,000 deaths each year in the U.S., which is three lives every seven minutes - over 600 people a day," Gerencer explained. "However, when all four links of the

Chain of Survival are linked together, the survival rates for victims can rise from 5% to as high as 49%,” Gerencer noted.

The four links of the Chain of Survival are (1) call 9-1-1; (2) early CPR; (3) early defibrillation of the heart; and, (4) early advanced care at a hospital.

“Rob is alive today because the Chain of Survival worked here in Grand Haven Township,” Gerencer noted. “M&S Tool sent their employees to a CPR class; Mike, Asa, and Jim started CPR within 1 minute; 911 was called within 1 minute; Grand Haven Township arrived within 2 minutes to defibrillate Rob’s heart; and, the NOCH Community Ambulance Service arrived within 5 minutes to provide advanced care and get Rob to the hospital,” Gerencer explained.

“Emergency care staff are trained and paid to provide great care,” Gerencer said. “But, without the assistance of people who respond quickly to an emergency by calling 9-1-1 and begin CPR, our training may be too late,” Gerencer concluded.

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