



City of Missoula Fire Department

625 E. Pine Street | Missoula, MT 59802

Office: 406.552.6210 | Fax: 406.552.6184

Informational Release - For Immediate Broadcast

To: All Media Outlets

From: Missoula Fire Department

Re: Community Member Recognition for CPR Lifesaving Event

Date: 3/23/2023

During the chilly morning hours of Tuesday, February 28th four incredible individuals were brought together by their unwavering intent to help others in need.

At approximately 8:18am the Missoula Fire Department, University of Montana Police Department, Missoula Emergency Services, and the City of Missoula Police Department were dispatched to the corner of Beckwith and Arthur Avenue to an unresponsive individual. Upon arrival on scene, first responders found four individuals taking turns providing CPR to the patient who had suffered cardiac arrest moments earlier. Captain Joel Gaertig, SRFF Curt Shields, and FF Levi Morris were able to relieve the individuals who were providing CPR. The patient was then transported to a local hospital for follow-up and has since made a full recovery.

Last week, MFD and UM personnel were able to get together to recognize John K., Lisena B., Jeff G. and Aleah O. (not present) for their heroic lifesaving efforts. Chief Gordy Hughes presented each individual with a certificate in recognition for their service.

"These incredible folks, who provided the initial CPR on this call, saved this patient's life. These four people not only stopped to check on and help a stranger, but they knew CPR and were able to successfully administer it," said MFD's EMS Coordinator Dave Smith.

John, one of the first to provide CPR to the patient, reflected on how he initially found the individual. He indicated that he wasn't sure if the individual was sleeping or unresponsive but decided to check on them regardless. Around the same time, Lisena was driving by and after noticing the individual lying in the grass, she immediately pulled over to assist.



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"We realized [the individual] was unresponsive and after checking [their] pulse, we started CPR," said John. He shared that he had never performed CPR outside of the training he received so he was a little nervous at first but knew the individual needed help. Meanwhile, two additional passers-by Jeff and Aleah, noticed the other two administering chest compressions and stopped to help.

"The simple act of chest compressions keeps the organs of the body, including the brain, alive until first responders are able to arrive," said EMSC Dave Smith. Capt. Gaertig recalled that the CPR provided by these individuals also assisted first responders as they arrived on scene and needed to unload necessary medical equipment to continue life-saving procedures.

EMSC Smith added that everyone should consider becoming CPR trained, "CPR provided to an individual suffering from cardiac arrest buys them time and can improve their chances of a successful recovery prior to first responders getting to a scene.

We are overwhelmed with gratitude that the patient made a full recovery but are especially grateful to the four members of our community who took the time to become CPR certified and put their training into practice when someone was in need.

MFD holds CPR training the first and third Wednesday evening of each month. Call (406) 552-6210 to register today!