

Appeal supports training that can be lifesaver

By LAURIE PELLICHERO
Special to The Times

Among its many programs, the American Red Cross of Central New Jersey offers health and safety courses to help members of the community feel safer, healthier and more self-reliant in the face of an emergency. It provides training classes in CPR, first aid, automated external defibrillators, swimming, lifeguarding, HIV/AIDS education, baby sitter's training and first aid for pets.

The American Red Cross First Aid, CPR and AED programs are designed to impart valuable life-saving skills and knowledge.

Mike Speck, a health and safety instructor with the American Red Cross of Central New Jersey, discovered that his training is a life saver.

John Nawyn of the U.S. Geological Survey's New Jersey District was on the phone with a colleague in the Idaho District when he suddenly stopped talking. The colleague heard what sounded like choking, and immediately called the New Jersey District's office to have someone check on Nawyn.

Co-workers found Nawyn unresponsive. They remembered that Speck was in the building that day, providing CPR instruction and employee training on the use of the company's newly purchased AED unit. They ran to get Speck out of class.

When Speck reached him, Nawyn was already in cardiac arrest. Speck instructed the co-workers to call 911 and retrieve the new defibrillator before beginning CPR. He shocked Nawyn's heart twice before the police arrived with oxygen. Speck and a police officer continued CPR and administered two

additional shocks before a pulse was detected and Nawyn began breathing on his own. Color was returning to Nawyn's face just as paramedics arrived and rushed him to the hospital.

Nawyn recovered and all agreed that things would have been horribly different if not for the quick thinking of his co-workers, the skill of Speck and an easily accessible AED unit.

According to the Red Cross, survival is reduced by 10 percent each minute defibrillation is delayed. The average response time for an ambulance is 10 minutes. As in Nawyn's case, training in CPR and AED and having a defibrillator on hand undoubtedly help increase the chance for survival.

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"My husband is alive today thanks to Mike Speck, the Red Cross and U.S. Geological's workplace AED," said Anne Nawyn.

Funds from this year's Times' Holiday Appeal will be used to support the services and programs of the American Red Cross of Central New Jersey.

The Times deducts no overhead expenses. All money goes directly to the designated nonprofit agency.

To make a donation in support of the American Red Cross of Central New Jersey, please make your check payable to The Holiday Appeal and mail or deliver it to: 500 Perry St., Box 847, Trenton, NJ 08605. All gifts will be acknowledged and anonymity, if requested, will be granted.

For more information about the American Red Cross of Central New Jersey, look online (www.njredcross.org) or call (609) 951-8550.



Photo courtesy of American Red Cross of Central New Jersey
Red Cross instructor Mike Speck, left, received the Good Samaritan Award from John Nawyn at the Red Cross Heroes Breakfast in March.