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Red Cross lifeguard training helps save lives

By LAURIE PELLICHERO
Special to The Times

Lifeguards are responsible for the lives of those in, on and around the water.

Hours and hours of Red Cross training have prepared many area lifeguards to jump to action without a moment's hesitation.

Christina was certified by the Red Cross as a lifeguard and worked for several years at community swimming pools. She said she was inspired to become a lifeguard after many summers of watching lifeguards at the Yardville Swim Club.

"It's very important to keep your lifesaving skills sharp and always maintain current certifications in health and safety courses," she said.

Christina's training helped her save a life during a first-grade backyard pool party in Hamilton, when she saw a 7-year-old boy slip under the water's surface. Her Red Cross training took over as she immediately dove into the pool

and pulled the child out of the water. As a parent rushed to dial 911, Christina began cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Minutes later, the victim was revived and Emergency Medical Technicians who arrived shortly thereafter credited Christina with saving the child's life.

"Christina's save represents all the Red Cross is about," said Kathleen Pearson, director of health and safety services at the American Red Cross of Central New Jersey. "Every day we are training people in lifesaving skills so that they are confident and prepared to handle an emergency situation when it arises. Getting trained saves lives."

The Red Cross lifeguarding program is open to those age 15 and older. Through classroom learning and hands-on practice, students learn surveillance skills to help them recognize and prevent injuries; rescue skills in the water and on land; first aid training and pro-



fessional rescuer CPR to help prepare for any emergency; and professional lifeguard responsibilities like interacting with the public and addressing uncooperative victims.

Last year, the American Red Cross of Central New Jersey trained 16,209 people in water safety/lifeguarding.

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 Times Holiday Appeal and mail or hand deliver it to: 500 Perry St., Box 847, Trenton, N.J. 08605. To make a donation online, visit www.njredcross.org.

All gifts will be acknowledged. Anonymity, if requested, will be granted.

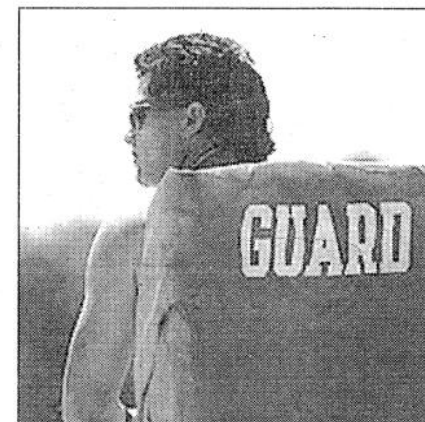


Photo courtesy of Red Cross

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For more information about the Lifeguarding program, call the American Red Cross of Central New Jersey at (609) 951-8550.