
NEWS RELEASE

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BC Ambulance Service

WOMEN PERFORMS CPR AND SAVES HUSBAND

WHISTLER – On June 16, the British Columbia Ambulance Service (BCAS) presented Kaye Halstead with a Vital Link Award to recognize the actions she took to save her husband's life.

“Mrs. Halstead is to be honoured for the way in which she handled this life and death situation,” said Joan McIntyre, MLA for West Vancouver-Garibaldi. “It takes tremendous courage and will to keep level-headed during unforeseen emergencies, especially involving family members. We acknowledge her life-saving actions.”

Kaye and John Halstead were having breakfast on September 14, 2007, when John appeared unresponsive at the table, like he had fallen asleep. “I called his name and shook him a little bit but he didn't respond, so I called 911,” Kaye Halstead recalled. “The BC Ambulance Service dispatcher was very helpful; he told me to put my husband on the floor, tilt his head back, and to listen for any breathing. All I could hear was a little gurgling. The dispatcher then talked me through the steps of CPR, which I continued until the BCAS paramedics arrived.”

When Kaye Halstead called 911 she was connected with BCAS Emergency Medical Dispatcher Shaun Hansen. Shaun, like many other BCAS dispatchers, is on the other end of the phone during many tragic events and provides comfort and often life saving advice to callers. In this case Shaun carefully guided Mrs. Halstead through performing CPR while the paramedics were on route. Shaun's instructions were vital in the outcome of Mr. Halstead that day.

“We know that even with the best technology, medical expertise and timely deployment of first responders, the best chance for someone in cardiac arrest is still to have a bystander perform CPR until paramedics arrive,” said Dr. Karen Wanger, BCAS Regional Medical Coordinator. “I have no doubt that Kaye's efforts helped save her husband's life,” added Wanger.

The BCAS Vital Link Award is presented to individuals who are involved in successful CPR efforts. Aside from providing some much deserved recognition, the Vital Link Award represents an important opportunity to further community awareness about the benefits of learning and using CPR.

With most out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occurring at home, early recognition of a cardiac emergency by a family member, early access to 911, and early bystander CPR are critical to saving lives. It's important for people to listen to the instructions that BCAS dispatchers provide them as these instructions can be life saving.

The Vital Link Award was presented at the BCAS ambulance station in Whistler by BCAS Regional Medical Director, Dr Karen Wanger, BCAS Superintendent Richard Chick and the BCAS EMD, Shaun Hansen, who took the call. The Halstead family was also in attendance.

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