

## Defibrillator in back seat pays off with one life saved — so far

The defibrillator Marc Alfonso carries around in his station wagon at all times has been used only once.

It was July 16, on Southwest Marine Drive in Vancouver when Alfonso, 29, jumped into the chaos that followed a red pickup truck after it hit a power pole and slammed into a retaining wall at Victoria Drive.

What happened that day has earned Alfonso and another passerby, Quisha Girard-Lau, a Vital Link Award from the B.C. Ambulance Service. The award, recognizing life-saving actions in a medical emergency, will be presented today.

Langley electrician Lorne Dufour's heart had stopped and he'd lost control of his truck. He was in cardiac arrest when Alfonso grabbed his \$2,300 first-aid kit from his car and found Girard-Lau doing chest compressions on Dufour.

While lifeguard Girard-Lau worked pumping Dufour's chest, Alfonso put a tube into his mouth, meant to keep the tongue off the back of the mouth so the airway stayed open.

He grabbed his bag-valve mask that was attached to an oxygen tank and put it over Dufour's face and ventilated him by squeezing the mask, distributing pure oxygen into his lungs.

A minute later, Alfonso grabbed his \$1,700 defibrillator and shocked the 45-year-old's heart.

Dufour, who is still recovering from the life-threatening heart trouble, knows how unbelievably lucky he was that day.

"My friends say, 'Buy a lottery ticket,'" Dufour said Wednesday. "I tell them I've already won."

He also realizes that "thank you" is about all he can say.

"What do you want me to say?" he chuckled. "He's a good guy. He saved my life."



Marc Alfonso checks out his life saving kit he keeps in his car in Vancouver December 8, 2010. Alfonso is receiving an award for saving a man who was having a heart attack at an MVA in July on Southwest Marine Drive when he used his defibrillator and oxygen.

In 2008, after Alfonso's best friend, Andrew Dolsji, died in a car accident, he swore to himself that he would never be without the training and equipment required to make a difference to someone's life.

He took countless hours of medical training. He purchased a state-of-the-art first-aid kit that includes the battery-powered defibrillator — and it's always in his car.

Alfonso sees himself as part of a big team that saved Dufour.

"There were the paramedics . . . a team of doctors, a team of nurses, a team of recovery specialists, everyone contributed to it," he said.

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