



Prepared Coworkers Save Woman's Life

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A Bellevue woman is alive today because of her prepared coworkers and their quick-thinking actions.

When Reina Walls went into work one snowy Monday in January five years ago, she was already flustered. Having to take her daughter to school in snowy conditions she was running a bit behind. Plus, she was feeling under the weather, she diagnosed herself with the flu with a touch of bronchitis.



Her diagnosis was almost dead wrong.

Walking into work at MUD, she collapsed in the hallway.

Her coworker Keith Alexander thought she slipped from the wet hallway. But when he saw her, he immediately knew it was much worse.

"She was making kind of like a gurgling noise and you could tell that her eyes weren't right," he said. "That's the reason I felt for a pulse. And I didn't get one."

Keith immediately called for help. As others called 911, he dove in to CPR.

"I was like literally pounding holes through Reina's chest," he said.

As others began to crowd in the hallway to see how they could help, Bonnie Savine, a certified CPR teacher arrived. She noticed they were doing compressions closer to Reina's stomach, and told them to move toward her breast bone.

"They were far too low," Savine said. "So I said, 'you're too low,' and they said, 'well get in here.'"

She did, continuing CPR in what her coworkers describe as a calm and gentle manner. Throughout the ordeal, Bonnie continued to try to get Reina's attention.

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But still, nothing.

That's when someone called out to grab an AED machine.

"The head VP at that time was telling everyone to run, giving directions like a military sergeant," Reina said.

Hooking Reina up to the AED machine, her coworkers remember continuing compressions as it checked for a pulse. Eventually, it advised them to shock her.

"I was elated when it said shock advised," Bonnie said. "I had taught, shown videos, gone through the steps 100 times or more prior to that; I was still not prepared for the type of reaction that the body does have. You see it on TV and they show all sorts of types of jumping off the table when the shock is advised. But it really does, it delivers an impact from this tiny little AED."

After the shock they hoped they were in the clear. Still, no pulse.

As they waited for paramedics to arrive another coworker ran to the roof, guiding the ambulance to the right entrance at MUD.

Just as the first paramedic arrived the AED machine said to shock Reina again. Looking for guidance from the first responder, he told them to shock her.

"Then he came in, he dove in and right away he did he said. 'I got a pulse!'" Keith recalled.

Reina coded once more in the ambulance on the way to the hospital. But, determined to survive, she eventually stabilized.

She said had it not been for her quick thinking coworkers and their preparedness, she doesn't know that she would have survived.

"Everybody had a role and that was vital to saving my life," she said.

Before her heart attack Reina said she lived a healthy life. No one in the office thought she would be the one to collapse in the hallway.

Now that she knows the warning signs, she stays vigilant to her health. A few months after this episode, she started to feel sick again. But this time, she knew to check in with her cardiologist.

"I remember getting the thumbs up later that I knew what was going on because I wouldn't have made it," she said.

Now Reina advocates for women to take control of their health through her organization Healing Tender Hearts. And with the smile that she shares with coworkers, she jokes that coworkers should, too.

"Having a workplace that have people that like you, haha, and that know CPR and have an AED device."
