



HEROES FOR LIFE™
PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

COLLEAGUES RUSH TO SAVE DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVANT

"When we fail to plan, we plan to fail." Whether or not Jo Steinbusch is familiar with Benjamin Franklin's famous saying, he clearly lives the meaning of it. In fact, preparation may have saved his life.

Improving the lives of the people in his community has been one of Jo's driving forces. For more than 40 years, he has worked as a civil servant in cities and towns in the Netherlands, establishing relationships with the people in his community and advancing programs and policies that create a better place to live, work, and raise families.

Jo serves as the general director and municipal secretary of Veere, a tourist destination that draws 4 million people a year to its beaches and popular Storm Surge Barrier. One summer day, as visitors were enjoying the warm weather on the town's beaches, 56-year-old Jo was in an unexpected fight for his life.

It had been a typical workday. Jo spent most of the morning out of the office, participating in meetings about issues of concern to business leaders, residents, and other government officials. On this day, he concluded his morning of meetings with lunch in one of the town's best restaurants, then headed back to the office to brief the town's mayor on what he had learned.

As he entered the building, he felt slightly dizzy but chalked that up to the warm weather and heavy lunch. While walking toward his desk, Jo saw the mayor, and they began talking. That is the last thing Jo remembers. Suddenly, he fell to the floor, unconscious, and the alarmed mayor called out for help.



"I think we need more AEDs available in the community, because what happened to me can happen to anyone."

— Jo Steinbusch
Sudden cardiac arrest victim



Three first responders who work at City Hall were on the scene within moments. Usually, they are called to put out small fires and deliver first aid to injured people, but luckily they are trained on cardiac resuscitation and carried the building's ZOLL automated external defibrillator (AED) with them to the rescue. They applied the AED's electrodes to Jo's chest, then delivered three shocks to revive his heart.

The next thing Jo knew, he was lying on the ground with a group of city rescue workers surrounding him. "The first thing I can remember is wondering, 'What are all these people doing here? Shouldn't you all be working?'" Jo says with a laugh. Meanwhile, an ambulance arrived and transported him to the hospital.

Not wanting to alarm his wife, Rosemarie, Jo called her from the hospital to tell her he wasn't feeling well and asked her to meet him there. When she learned what had happened, she was distraught – but thankful for the AED and all the people whose heroic efforts saved her husband's life.

Jo immediately underwent cardiac bypass surgery and returned to work soon after. He's now fully recovered and back to cycling in the historic seaside village where he lives, spending time with his three grandchildren, and enjoying all the other things he did before the sudden cardiac arrest.



Jo Steinbusch with the ZOLL AED Plus that saved his life.

He is very proud of his colleagues who used their training to save his life. "Because the first responders and I work at the same government building, we know each other well. It was very special to see them the first time after my sudden cardiac arrest and thank them for saving my life."

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"I didn't have a history of heart disease before my sudden cardiac arrest. If it weren't for the AED, I wouldn't be here to tell you about this today."

*– Jo Steinbusch
Sudden cardiac arrest rescuer*

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He is especially grateful that the city had installed an AED and ensured the first responders knew how to use it. "I think we need more AEDs available in the community because what happened to me could happen to anyone. I didn't have a history of heart disease before my sudden cardiac arrest. If it weren't for the AED, I wouldn't be here to tell you about this today," says Jo.

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