



HEROES FOR LIFE™
PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

IMPROVING THE ODDS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES



When the call came into the Prophetstown, Illinois, police department for a suspected heart attack that day in March 2020, Sergeant Chad Hermes was understandably concerned. In his 21-plus years on the force, he'd responded to many similar calls.

Prophetstown is in a rural area of Illinois, and all fire and emergency personnel are 100% on call. EMTs are often 30 minutes away. Thanks to a grant from a local charitable organization, however, each squad car is equipped with an automated external defibrillator (AED) so that police can help while waiting for EMTs to arrive.

Just another Saturday

Sgt. Hermes rushed to the address the caller provided. When he knocked on the door, homeowner Darrell Robinson answered. Sgt. Hermes held up his AED and asked, "Who am I here for?" Surprisingly, Darrell replied, "Me."

Darrell insisted he was okay to drive himself to the hospital. It was just a regular Saturday. He'd done three miles on the treadmill earlier but was suffering from digestive issues and heartburn that antacid couldn't relieve. His wife Linda thought it might be his heart and she had called 911.

Sgt. Hermes convinced Darrell to at least sit on the steps with him to await the ambulance and placed his ZOLL AED Plus® on a nearby table.

"We were just shooting the breeze," remembers Sgt. Hermes. While they were waiting, Darrell's son Matt arrived to check on his Dad. And just as Matt reached the steps where the two men were sitting, Darrell suddenly went limp and collapsed into Matt's arms.

Sgt. Hermes suspected sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). He couldn't find a pulse.

Help from all directions

At that same moment that Matt arrived, neighbor and EMT-in-training Marlo Jasinski appeared. Marlo had seen the call on her pager and realized the person in need lived right across the road! She immediately began cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) compressions while Sgt. Hermes grabbed his ZOLL® AED and applied the electrodes.

The AED called for a shock and then instructed the rescuers to continue compressions. At one point, Sgt. Hermes thought Darrell was regaining

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It's amazing to think I was dying — with no vitals — and that [AED] brought me back.

— Darrell Robinson, SCA survivor

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consciousness, but the AED determined that his heart was still in a dangerous rhythm and delivered a second shock. “We just followed the instructions,” Sgt. Hermes said later. “[The AED does] all of the work for you.” EMTs arrived during the second round of compressions and transferred Darrell to the hospital.

An atypical outcome

Doctors told Darrell’s family that he’d suffered a widow maker heart attack that led to an SCA. One of his arteries was 99% blocked and the other was 100% blocked. Darrell received three stents that evening and was released just over a week later.

After a few months, Darrell was back on the road selling flooring to customers he’s known for many years. He heard many stories about relatives and friends who suffered SCA but who weren’t as lucky as he was. He’s very grateful that his story ended differently.

Understandably, all of the Robinsons are now huge proponents of AEDs. Son Matt believes that everyone should have one, and son Mark, an athletic trainer, purchased his own to carry with him when he visits clients. “It’s amazing,” says Darrell, “to think I was dying — with no vitals — and that device brought me back.”

Prophetstown is small, so Sgt. Hermes sees Darrell pretty often around town. It’s a nice reminder of the first time he used an AED to save someone.