



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, August 26, 2014

Council Session - Updated

Item C-1

Presentation of the Grand Island Fire Department's Citizen's Citation Award to Megan Gangwish and Deb O'Hara

Staff Contact: Cory Schmidt, Fire Chief

Council Agenda Memo

From: EMS Division Chief Russ Blackburn
Meeting: August 26, 2014
Subject: Citizen's Citation
Item #'s: C-1
Presenter(s): EMS Division Chief Russ Blackburn

Background

Every day, about ten people die from unintentional drowning. Of these, two are children aged 14 or younger. Drowning ranks fifth among the leading causes of unintentional injury death in the United States.

More than 50% of drowning victims treated in emergency departments (EDs) require hospitalization or transfer for further care (compared with a hospitalization rate of about 6% for all unintentional injuries). These nonfatal drowning injuries can cause severe brain damage that may result in long-term disabilities such as memory problems, learning disabilities, and permanent loss of basic functioning (e.g., permanent vegetative state).

Children ages 1 to 4 have the highest drowning rates. In 2009, among children 1 to 4 years old who died from an unintentional injury, more than 30% died from drowning. Among children ages 1 to 4, most drownings occur in home swimming pools. Drowning is responsible for more deaths among children 1-4 than any other cause except congenital anomalies (birth defects). Among those 1-14, fatal drowning remains the second-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death behind motor vehicle crashes.

Learn Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). In the time it takes for paramedics to arrive, your CPR skills could save someone's life. (CDC website, Unintentional Drowning: Get the Facts)

Discussion

On July 4, 2014 there was party of family and friends at a house on Midaro Drive. Children had been swimming in a nearby sand pit lake with lifejackets on and adult supervision. The children were called out of the water because it was time to eat. A father went up to the house to get his daughter some food. Without anyone knowing, his daughter went out on the dock on the lake. When he returned with the food he could not

find his daughter. His daughter was found floating in the lake lifeless. The father pulled his daughter from the lake to the lawn and called for someone to call 9-11.

Megan Gangwish heard the call for help. Megan a recent nursing school graduate and experienced Emergency Room Technician ran to help. She started doing chest compressions on the “purple,” pulseless, and not breathing child.

As people ran to the house to call for help Deb O’hara heard what had happened. Deb a nurse for 38 years also ran to help. Deb found Megan doing chest compressions so she started mouth to mouth ventilations on the child.

After chest compressions and about six artificial ventilations over the course of about 1 minute, the child started to breathe on her own coughing up water. This is the state the paramedics found her upon their arrival. The patient continued to regain consciousness during the ambulance trip to the hospital. She was talking to the paramedic by the time they arrived at the hospital.

The girl has made a full recovery. She remembered tripping on the dock and falling into the water. If it had not been for Ms. Gangwish’s and Ms. O’Hara’s bystander CPR this story could have had a much sadder ending.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Megan Gangwish and Deb O’Hara be presented with the Grand Island Fire Department’s Citizen’s Citation for their life saving efforts on July 4, 2014.