



# DISPATCH

MEDIC ONE FOUNDATION

Newsletter Fall 2022

## How Do You Thank Someone for Saving Your Life?

On November 23, 2020, Lita Johnson and her husband, Al, were having a quiet afternoon at home in West Seattle. "I went to the kitchen to feed the cat," she remembers. "All of a sudden, BAM, I had the most excruciating pain in my chest. I've never felt anything like that before, and I thought, this is bad."

*Continued on page 2*





*"It just shakes you to the core of your being. I guess I died, but I'm still here."*

*-Lita Johnson, Survivor*

Lita stumbled to the couch and told Al to call 911. "He was on the phone, saying, 'I think she's having chest pain.' And I'm saying, 'I'm having a heart attack! I'm having a heart attack!'"

Seattle Fire Station 37, where Medic 32 is stationed, was only ten blocks away. EMTs and paramedics arrived within minutes.

"I remember that the living room was full of firefighters and the paramedics. I was sweating and struggling for breath when a female paramedic took control. She said to me, 'We've got you. We've got you.' After hooking me up to the equipment, she told me I was having a little heart attack, but the way she said all that, so calm and assured, made me feel that I would be okay. That I was not going to die."

Still in terrible pain, Lita was loaded into the medic unit to be transported to Swedish Cherry Hill. "I was still awake while we were driving, struggling to breathe. The rig was shaking, and the siren was going—a lot was going on. Another paramedic was with me in the back of the rig. He said he was going to give me something for the pain, but at that moment I told him, 'I'm going to pass out.'"

Lita had gone into cardiac arrest. The paramedic was able to resuscitate her, and she was vaguely aware of arriving at the hospital. Al followed the medic unit, but he couldn't go inside the hospital because of COVID restrictions. One of the paramedics met him in the parking lot to tell him what had happened and to let him know that she was taken to the Critical Care Unit (CCU). "Al had to sit out in his truck and wait to find out what was happening," says Lita. "He didn't know if it would be good or really bad news. It was cold and dark, and he was just waiting and waiting and waiting for a call from one of the nurses."

As Lita describes it, she woke up in a hospital bed and felt okay. Al had a different experience that day.



“Al was the one who really went through this traumatic experience. I did too, of course, but I was out of it. Al was physically and emotionally present the whole time. He essentially lost his wife and had her come back from the other side. To this day, our relationship is different. Wonderful, I might add!”

Two days later, Lita left the hospital on Thanksgiving Day. She and Al quietly celebrated the holiday, and all they were thankful for as she began to really think about what she’d been through.

“It just shakes you to the core of your being. I guess I died, but I’m still here. It took so long for me to trust my heart again,” she says. “I thought,

I’ve got to get over this. I can’t live in fear that this will happen again. I’ll just live my life and hope that the paramedics are around if it does.”

Lita has had no problems with her heart since that day. She sees her experience as a blessing in disguise, because it led her to make some healthy life changes. Most of all, Lita says thanks every day for the firefighter/EMTs and paramedics at station 37. There would be no more holidays to celebrate, if not for them.

“I am so forever grateful to Medic One paramedics and those firefighters. I am just so forever grateful. How do you say thank you for this? They saved my life.”

# LIFESAVERS *Gala*

Please join us for an evening of fine dining, an exciting auction, and to honor our region’s firefighters and paramedics who respond every day to catastrophic disasters and medical emergencies.

Proceeds will provide world-class training and education for the students of Paramedic Training Class 49.

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2022**  
6:00-10:00 PM

**MEYDENBAUER CENTER**  
11100 NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street | Bellevue, WA 98004

## DRESS ATTIRE

Cocktail/business attire is suggested

## FEATURED ENTERTAINMENT

The Jewel Tones—Motown-inspired vocal trio

## TICKET PRICES

Individual Ticket | \$175      Table of 10 | \$1,750



## REGISTRATION

Please register through the QR Code or [lifesaversgala.org](https://lifesaversgala.org) by Friday, October 14<sup>th</sup>. If you have any questions regarding the event, contact Kathleen DeVega at (425) 625-2137 or [kathleen@mediconefoundation.org](mailto:kathleen@mediconefoundation.org).



## Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority: Mobile Integrated Health Care Program

For a rapid, lifesaving medical response, fire service EMTs and paramedics are the best there is. When it's not an emergency—when someone calls 911 because of multiple, ongoing issues—something else is needed.

In 2012, Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority created FDCARES (Fire Department Community Assistance, Referrals and Education Services), a community injury and illness prevention program. Its goal is to assist people before an issue becomes an emergency. Six registered nurses were hired for the FDCARES unit.

“We needed staff who could sit with people for an extended period of time. We’re the only CARES unit that utilizes nurses who actually work for the fire department,” says Aaron Tyerman, Deputy Chief, Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority. “Often the high utilizer patients that our FDCARES unit encounters have multiple medical issues, accompanied by multiple social issues.”

The nurses provide medical assistance to patients, discuss medications and interactions, address wound care, speak to the patient’s

physician, assess fall risk, and develop long-term care plans. The program has been very successful, but it hasn’t been able to cover all the social issues that affect people who repeatedly call 911.

“We’re not equipped to manage issues like food and housing insecurities, mental and behavioral health, and drug and alcohol addiction that may coincide with our patients’ medical condition,” says Tyerman. “A licensed social worker has the skills to help these patients in crisis.”

Puget Sound Fire requested support from the Medic One Foundation to help fund a one-year pilot project. The proposal would add social workers to a mobile integrated health program.

“Nurses and social workers will make up two-person teams when they go out,” says Tyerman. “What we hope to see is the ability to provide our community members with a whole-person assessment. To bring the right resource to the person who needs it.”

Nancy Reynolds, a social worker, has been a part-time staff member in Puget Sound Fire’s office. She’s seen how effective even a limited integrated health program can be.

“A patient called 911 multiple times a day for a lift assist and fear of falling,” recalls Reynolds. “He struggled with persistent symptoms related to a traumatic brain injury and was often ‘paralyzed’ at the thought of attempting to move. We connected him to a primary care provider and mental health counselor. Today, he rarely calls 911.”

Another patient lived alone in a SeaTac apartment that had become infested with cockroaches. She wasn’t eating well and couldn’t take care of herself. “Her food kept disappearing and she would be on the floor for days,” says Reynolds. After multiple ER visits, Reynolds coordinated with Adult Protective Services to place her in an adult family home. “It was really heartwarming to see her with clean clothes and eating well and being loved in this home,” Reynolds said after a recent visit.

Specialized help with both long-term medical issues and multiple social issues will benefit individual patients, and it will also make better use of EMT and paramedic services for potentially life-threatening emergencies.

“When one of our emergency units goes out repeatedly for a patient with a non-emergent need that isn’t being properly addressed,” says

Tyerman, “it pulls that emergency unit out of service for a potential emergent, life-threatening call elsewhere. By using nurse and social worker teams, we’d be bringing the right resource to the person who needs it.”

If the pilot is successful, Puget Sound Fire is committed to fully funding the program in the future.

“We believe that the expanded use of social workers will be a long-term program that will be sustained for years to come,” says Matthew Morris, Fire Chief, Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority.

Thanks to the Medic One Foundation grant, Puget Sound Fire is starting the mobile integrated health care pilot program in September. Three new social workers will be teamed with the current nursing staff.

“We give heartfelt thanks to the Medic One Foundation and their donors for what they’ve done for us, for their support. We wouldn’t be doing this without their generosity,” says Tyerman. “The impact that they’ve had on this community, it’s really been a pleasure.”







## EMT Training Program Helps Open Doors for Aspiring Firefighter

Cameron DiCenzo grew up in Shoreline, working during high school to help his family financially. At 17, he didn't have a career path in mind until his aunt, who worked for the Shoreline Fire Department, told him about a cadet program there.

"It opened my eyes to what the fire service was all about, and I learned that EMS (Emergency Medical Services) was a big part of that," says Cameron. "I also learned about structure, discipline, and how to be a better person."

Cameron had found a goal for his future, but it was complicated. In high school, it had been a struggle for him to work, study, and also be involved in the cadet program. He wanted to attend the EMT Training Program at North

*If you would like to learn more about the EMT Scholarship Program or help support future scholarships, please visit [mediconefoundation.org/emt](https://mediconefoundation.org/emt).*

EMT students work together in small groups when participating in medical or trauma scenarios, learning how to respond to different types of emergencies.

Seattle College, and he believed it would have to be his sole focus in order to succeed.

"I knew I didn't want to have to work during the program," says Cameron. "I'd already had the experience of working at two jobs, and I wanted to really focus on all the medical stuff."

An instructor with the EMT Training Program told Cameron about scholarships available from Medic One Foundation, and he applied. "With the scholarship, and the money I'd saved from work, I could do the EMT program and be successful at it."

Once in the program, Cameron knew he'd made the right choice. One of the most enjoyable things about class was collaborating with other students. "I liked the team aspect. We really got to know the people in our group. We still talk and check in on how we're all doing."

Although he'd been in the cadet program at Shoreline, and had seen a lot of the EMS equipment, the EMT course was a whole new experience for Cameron. "The EMT program starts off with trauma, and then it switches to medical. Trauma is more visual, you just treat what you see; medical takes more investigation. It took me some time to make that switch, to get my mind in place for the more investigative part. But I always like starting a new focus."

Cameron began working with AMR (American Medical Response) right after finishing the EMT course. It was quite a change from practicing in a classroom setting.

"I think the biggest difference is patient care. In EMT class you're with people you know, and the patient scenarios use actors. It's very different with real patients. You need to let them know what you're doing. Your patients need to feel comfortable and supported."

Cameron is fulfilling his long-term goal to be a firefighter/EMT as he starts his new job with the Shoreline Fire Department. "It's definitely where I want to focus my career," says Cameron. That dream might not have become reality without the donors who make the EMT Scholarship Program available. He's grateful to them.

"I just think this program is very beneficial, because it opens the door to people who might not otherwise be able to pursue this career choice," says Cameron. "It really does open the door."



## Grant Equips Local Fire Department With New Infant CPR Training Manikins

Thanks to our generous supporters, Medic One Foundation was proud to offer an EMS Equipment Grant to Renton Regional Fire Authority to help fund the purchase of 16 new infant CPR training manikins.

"Medic One Foundation's EMS Equipment Grants allow many King County Fire Departments, including Renton Regional Fire Authority, the opportunity to upgrade their EMS training supplies. For my department, it allowed both citizens and firefighter/EMTs to train with new modern infant manikins that include positive feedback technology. Both student and instructor can use this added feature to ensure proper CPR is being performed. I appreciate all those that have donated to this immeasurable foundation!" Says Deputy Chief Chuck DeSmith. To support our EMS Equipment Fund, please visit [mediconefoundation.org](https://www.mediconefoundation.org) and donate today!



## LaVerna McClean, Friend and Donor to Medic One Foundation

LaVerna Hegemann McClean grew up in rural Nebraska during the dust bowl years of the Great Depression. It was a difficult time, but her life changed radically when she met John McClean, a young medical student in Omaha. They married and moved to his hometown, Seattle.

“We were a medical family from the get-go,” recalls their daughter, Dr. Janice Rock. “Mom dived into community involvement, particularly in the medical community, including what was then known as Seattle Children’s Hospital Auxiliary. She was a remarkable person, a very engaged person until the end of her life, always interested in humanity.”

LaVerna and John were impressed with Medic One from its beginning. It was personal for them. “Back when my dad was setting up his medical practice in Seattle,” says Janice, “his own father had a heart attack at home and died. He lived just up the hill, but we couldn’t save him. At that time, there was no one to call who could

give skilled pre-hospital care in the field. That changed in 1970, and since then,” Janice adds, “Medic One has saved countless lives.”

Years later, John’s life was one of those saved by Medic One. He went into V-fib on the golf course and was successfully treated by paramedics until arriving at a hospital. “He survived another 13 years; we had him longer and that was wonderful,” says Janice. Over the years, both LaVerna and John were served multiple times by Medic One, mainly for falls and fractures.

“As a family, we loved the idea of Medic One from its inception. It was enormously successful. I think people forget that we didn’t always have it,” says Janice, who worked for Dr. Michael Copass—former director of the Medic One Paramedic Training Program and medical

Pictured below is LaVerna (left), her daughter, Janice (right), and grandchild.





director for Seattle Medic One—when she was a young resident physician at Harborview. “We were connected to the whole concept of Medic One.”

After her husband’s death, LaVerna moved to Mirabella in downtown Seattle. She greatly enjoyed the lifestyle there, making new friends and reconnecting with old ones. Medic One Foundation provided ongoing classes and workshops for residents at Mirabella, and LaVerna was a loyal attendee at those events.

“They were wonderful, the way they treated elderly residents,” says Janice. “My mom had a strong personal relationship with the Foundation, and she very much believed in the services that Medic One and the Medic One Foundation provide. The whole package was important to her.”

The McCleans were annual fund donors for many years, a tradition that LaVerna continued. She included Medic One Foundation in her planned giving as well, with a generous bequest to Medic One Foundation after her death at 94 years old.

“It was a personal and intimate relationship for her,” Janice remembers. “She very much believed in what they do. She was honored to help support this service to the community, and to provide this donation to the Medic One Foundation in recognition of their invaluable—if not indispensable—service.”

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If our lifesaving mission is important to you, like it was to LaVerna and John, please consider a planned gift of your own to Medic One Foundation. Your generosity will help put exceptionally-trained paramedics on our streets—paramedics who someday may save the life of a friend, a neighbor, a loved one...or even your own.

For more information, please visit our website at [mediconefoundation.giftplans.org](https://mediconefoundation.giftplans.org) or contact Sara Oshikawa-Clay, Director of Philanthropy, at (425) 625-2032 or [sara@mediconefoundation.org](mailto:sara@mediconefoundation.org).



## De-escalation Training Necessary as Psychiatric Emergencies Rise

Over the past five years in King County, the number of responses by firefighter/EMTs to psychiatric emergencies has nearly doubled—from 7,755 responses in 2015 to 14,256 in 2020.

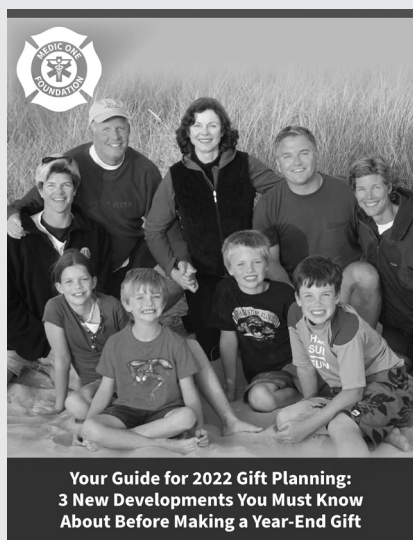
Firefighter/EMTs are first on scene in medical emergencies, so it's become imperative that they receive specific training on de-escalation and tactical communication with potentially volatile people. Currently, they receive little or no training on de-escalation tactics during psychiatric emergencies.

Thanks to a generous grant, Medic One Foundation is partnering with fire departments throughout King County to provide training to firefighter/EMTs to help address the skill sets needed on the streets to support mental health professionals, hospital staff, and the patient.

Funding from the grant provides a 90-minute class that teaches firefighter/EMTs basic de-escalation training for acute mental health needs like, paranoia, anxiety, delusion, and suicidal thoughts. During the class, they learn how to establish boundaries, engage in verbal and non-verbal communication, understand patient needs, enhance safety, and balance the demands of difficult patients with the needs of other patients and staff.

“Our responders do not need to be mental health professionals, but basic de-escalation can create an environment where we can keep an individual safe and get them to the services they need,” says Deputy Chief Chuck DeSmith, South King County Fire Training Consortium. “The purpose of this training is to help create a safer environment for both firefighter/EMTs and the people they serve every day.”

The program kicked-off in May, and since then over 470 firefighter/EMTs have completed the training. The goal is to train 2,000 firefighter/EMTs by June 2023.



## Help Medic One Foundation Save More Lives with A Tax-Smart Gift

There's no shortage of ways to give to charity, but donating individual retirement account (IRA) funds may offer a special tax break. If you are 70 ½ or older, you can transfer any amount up to \$100,000 annually directly from your IRA to support our lifesaving mission! This is called a qualified charitable distribution (QCD). The transfer doesn't generate taxable income, which could keep you in a lower tax bracket.

For more information on IRA gifts or on the transfer of assets via beneficiary designation, please contact Sara Oshikawa-Clay at [sara@mediconefoundation.org](mailto:sara@mediconefoundation.org) or (425) 625-2032 or visit our website at [mediconefoundation.org/giftplans.org](https://mediconefoundation.org/giftplans.org) for a free brochure.





SCAN ME TO  
REGISTER

## Learn How to Save a Life

Join Medic One Foundation this fall and winter for a CPR/AED Training Class to learn the lifesaving skills and knowledge necessary when responding to a sudden cardiac arrest! Our trainers are all certified instructors and will provide class participants quality hands-on experience and instruction in emergency medical care.

To register, please visit [mediconefoundation.org/programs/cpr](https://mediconefoundation.org/programs/cpr). For questions, contact our office at (425) 625-2137 or [cpr@mediconefoundation.org](mailto:cpr@mediconefoundation.org). We look forward to having you join us!

### In-person Training

In-person training costs \$30 per participant for those in need of a certification card. Participants who do not require a certification card may attend the class at no cost.

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	REGISTRATION DEADLINE
Tuesday, October 18	10:00 AM-1:00 PM	Seattle Pacific Tower	Friday, October 14
Tuesday, November 15	10:00 AM-1:00 PM	Seattle Pacific Tower	Friday, November 11
Tuesday, December 20	10:00 AM-1:00 PM	Bellevue Crossroads Community Center	Friday, December 16

### Online Training

Online training classes are free, but do not include a certification card.

DATE	TIME	PLATFORM	REGISTRATION DEADLINE
Tuesday, October 11	11:00 AM-12:00 PM	Zoom (Online)	Friday, October 7
Tuesday, November 8	11:00 AM-12:00 PM	Zoom (Online)	Friday, November 4
Tuesday, December 13	11:00 AM-12:00 PM	Zoom (Online)	Friday, December 9



## MEDIC ONE FOUNDATION

11747 NE 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Suite 310  
Bellevue, WA 98005

(425) 625-2137  
[mediconefoundation.org](http://mediconefoundation.org)

# DISPATCH

## Newsletter Fall 2022

# Did You Know?

Medic One Emergency Medical Services (EMS) serves more than 2,500,000 people in Seattle and King County and provides lifesaving services on average every 3 minutes.

76% of all out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrests in King County receive bystander CPR.

King County has a survival rate for sudden cardiac arrest of 51%, compared to the national average of 33%.

Our region's paramedics receive 2,100 hours of instruction, which is nearly double the national recommendation.

*Source: Public Health Seattle & King County Division of Emergency Medical Services 2020 Annual Report*