**GREELEY FIRE DEPARTMENT**

**AED Recognition**

**and**

**Pinning Ceremony**

**Thursday, October 27, 2022**

**GFD OVERVIEW**

It’s important that I share that the Department prides itself on being an all-hazards, all-response organization providing Advanced Life Support at the Paramedic level.

And whether it’s a medical emergency, a fire, a specialized rescue, or a complex disaster, it is my humble opinion that the women and men of the Greeley Fire Department are well prepared to respond.

As most in the room know, the City of Greeley is one of the fastest growing communities in all of Colorado - and with this growth, there will be challenges as we move into the future – but there are also some great opportunities in front of us.

The Greeley Fire Department remains ever committed to doing its part to provide the highest level of service and response with an unwavering commitment towards improving the quality of life within our community and for our citizens.

And this idea of improving “quality of life” is based on three tenets that truly define, in my opinion, why the Greeley Fire Department exists.

Those tenets are Prevention, Preparedness, and Response.

From the Prevention perspective, the GFD exists to prevent the loss of life and the loss of property.

Although we work to reduce risk within the community, we know that not every emergency can be prevented and therefore, the Greeley Fire Department is committed to being well-prepared for any emergency our community or our citizens may face.

And when those emergencies occur, the community and our citizens deserve the highest level of response. As the Fire Chief, it is important to me that regardless of the time of day, the day of the week, or whether it is A, B, or C shift who is on duty, our community and our citizens deserve, and will receive, nothing short of exceptional service.

Despite our drive and desire to be the best Fire Department, I’m well aware that it takes a village.

And that leads me into our special recognition.

**AED / CPR CALL**

I’m honored to stand before you all on behalf of the City of Greeley and Greeley FD to share a story – a story that illustrates how a community wide effort and the actions of several individuals saved the life of one of our citizens.

I’m pleased to introduce to you all Mr. Tom Crawford, who 23 days ago experienced Sudden Cardiac Arrest while playing basketball but he is alive and he is joining us here today.

I’m also pleased to be able to introduce to you and recognize the individuals responsible for saving his life.

**FACTS - AHA**

Let me explain Sudden Cardiac Arrest in it’s simplest form.

It is most easily described as the abrupt and sudden loss of heart function. In other words, the heart stops pumping blood.

And often, it’s the heart’s electrical system that malfunctions and the heart begins to beat dangerously fast. The lack of sufficient blood flow to the brain and other vital organs, more times than not, results in death.

According to the American Heart Association, Sudden Cardiac Arrest is the largest cause of natural death in the United States.

Over 350,000 Americans suffer from Sudden Cardiac Arrest each year and over 90% of those cases are fatal.

There are many factors that affect the survival rate.

For Example:

Age and overall health of the individual

But arguably the biggest factors include the amount of time that lapses between the Sudden Cardiac Arrest event and the initiation of life saving measures, such as CPR, the use of an AED, and advanced medical treatment and care.

With a national survival rate at or near 10%, the Greeley community survival rate for those experiencing Sudden Cardiac Arrest in 2022 is near 28% - nearly 3 times the national average.

But despite these numbers, we know we have much work to do to improve the chances of survival and it takes a village.

**HEART SAFE CITY**

As I mentioned, CPR and the use of an AED are critical to ensuring a successful outcome.

As such, it was nearly 10 years ago that the City of Greeley, Greeley Fire Department, Banner Paramedics, the CardioVascular Institute of North Colorado at NCMC and the NCMC Foundation established a vision.

That vision was to become a Heart Safe City where there would be an increase in awareness of Sudden Cardiac Arrest, a vision where CPR training was available to citizens, and a vision where the public had access to AEDs.

In 2013, this vision became a reality when the City of Greeley was designated as a Heart Safe City.

To date, and primarily through grants and donations led and supported by the NCMC Foundation and several other organizations, there are nearly 90 AEDs in our community and hundreds of people have been trained to provide CPR.

It takes a village

It takes a village to save a life.

**CHAIN OF SURVIVAL:**

So we have the structure and resources in place to help increase the chances of survival but none of this is as important as the system and the people within the system.

The system I am referring to is known as the “Chain of Survival” and the people I am referring to are sitting in this very room.

The Chain of Survival describes the sequence of critical interventions needed to increase the chances of survival.

* It first begins with immediate recognition of cardiac arrest and the activation of the emergency response system (calling 911)
* And it also includes immediate initiation of CPR and the immediate use of an AED

These steps must occur as fast as possible to increase the chances of survival - for every minute that passes, the chance of survival is reduced by 10%.

Rounding out the “Chain of Survival”, are the advanced resuscitation efforts by Emergency Response and Healthcare Personnel - and of course the months long rest and recovery process.

**THE EVENT**

So that’s the system and now I’d like to share with you all the people who made it happen on the morning of Tuesday, October 4th.

For GFD’s Lt. Matt Hawkins, Eng Chad Getting, and FF’s Colton Adams and Pat McCarthy and UCH EMT Jose Rios-Ochoa and Paramedic Gail Stallings – the day had started out as it usually does – they relieved other crew members from duty and completed their equipment checks to ensure every piece of equipment was ready to go.

Weld County Regional Communications Dispatcher Michelle Jones reported to work and caught up with her colleagues and then began processing 911 calls.

City of Greeley Downtown Recreation Center Staff – Armando Asseiss, Megan Miller, Brecklyn Everhart, Jose Rentas, and Alyssa Rodriguez, readied the facility and began greeting patrons as they came in to enjoy the amenities.

At approximately 8am, five citizens visited the rec center, just as they do every Tuesday morning for a game of pick-up basketball.

All 5 of them checked in at the counter and headed to the auxiliary gym.

What these citizens didn’t realize is that as they walked into the Gym, they passed the very Automated External Defibrillator that would later be used to resuscitate their friend Tom.

This AED happened to be donated by Kaiser Permanente as part of the Heart Safe City.

At approximately 8:50am, Tom Crawford suddenly collapsed and he lied lifeless on the Gym Floor.

Citizens, Dave Christiansen, Bill Martinez, Dean Stump, Larry Lawton, and Jim Connelly took immediate action. They initiated CPR and notified city staff of the medical emergency.

As this group of citizens rendered care, city staff took immediate action, as well. City Staff took over CPR and simultaneously deployed the AED and called 911.

The AED quickly recognized the cardiac rhythm that Mr. Crawford was in and a shock was advised. Staff delivered two shocks to Mr. Crawford.

On the other end of the line, Dispatcher Michelle Jones gathered critical information, such as location and nature of the incident and then dispatched GFD Ladder 1 and UCH Medic 16.

GFD and UCH crews arrived on scene and continued care.

A short time later, Mr. Crawford began to show signs of life. His cardiac rhythm had returned to a more normal rhythm. This is known as “Return of Spontaneous Circulation”. Most importantly, he had a pulse and he was breathing on his own.

By the time Mr. Crawford was loaded into the ambulance, he was speaking.

**RECOGNITION**

Mr. Crawford, would you please join me up front.

It takes a village to save a life

And it started with the vision in 2013 and it was executed on Tuesday, October 4th.

Would members of L1 and Med 16 come forward

Would Michelle Jones please come forward

I’d also like to ask Dave Christiansen, Bill Martinez, Dean Stumpf, Larry Lawton, and Jim Connelly to come forward

As well as City of Greeley employees, Armando Asseiss, Megan Miller, Brecklyn Everhart, Jose Rentas, and Alyssa Rodriguez.

On behalf of the City of Greeley and City Manager Lee, I am honored to present this certificate of recognition to each of you for your involvement with the lifesaving services rendered on Tuesday, October 4, 2022.

Your role and the combined efforts of our citizens, city employees, 911 dispatcher, emergency response personnel and our local health care system resulted in a preservation of a life.

Thank you.

Special acknowledgements:

* AED was donated by Kaiser Permanente
* NCMC Emergency Staff –
	+ nurses and doctors