

To help save a life: You never know when the training might pay off

By Kevin Purcell, NJSGA Executive Director

I'm starting a bit of a crusade and I'd like you to join me.

The American Heart Association says golf courses are among the most common places for heart attacks and I think we should be better prepared.

Many of you know of an incident I was involved in last summer at my home course, Forest Hill Field Club. Walking up the hill toward the clubhouse, after a lackluster round, I noticed some commotion on the first tee. I went over to find a man who was lying on the ground, unresponsive, and breathing heavily. I knelt down next to him.

His glasses were mangled around his face (from having fallen), cutting into the bridge of his nose. I lifted his head to remove them, and checked that his

airway was clear. His eyes were wide open and his breathing was laborious. A young lady knelt down on his other side and said he had a pulse, but a moment later it weakened and his breathing stopped. "No pulse," I heard. Then, training took over.

While I was general manager of the Bergen County golf courses, we held employee orientation each year and it often included CPR training. Over 200,000 rounds of golf went through our courses each season and we had a responsibility to be ready in an emergency. That training came back to me in a moment when there was more adrenaline than conscious thought.

Compressions, no breaths, I thought as the method of CPR had

changed. I began compressions and a rhythm set in. After a while he gasped a big breath and he was back. We stayed in position as each breath was troubled. He went out again and compressions resumed. This happened four or five times before the EMTs arrived, and once more while they were there. They worked around me to set up the AED and it eventually charged. We cleared for the shock and he jumped. Before long, he was ready for transport to the hospital.

We helped him through it. Frank Almasy called 911. Nicole Tardio kept watch on his pulse and calmed me during the compressions. Jason Fiore, the head professional at Forest Hill, got the EMTs to the spot, managed the situation and eventually followed the

ambulance to the hospital.

Fortunately, Carlos Tapia lived to play golf again and to send me a note at Christmas.

The timing was right. I was walking toward the clubhouse, Nicole was heading to the range, Frank was in his group. If this happened at a different time, it may have been different players who saved his life. But, in any case, it is critical to ensure that there are trained people nearby who have thought through emergency response and have CPR and AED training.

The NJSGA and the American Red Cross want to lay out a clear path for clubs and courses to get CPR and AED training. Please visit [njsga.org/CPR](https://www.njsga.org/CPR) for information on how your course can be prepared to save a life.