

Son uses health and safety training to save his mom

Teri Banas • Reader Submitted • July 27, 2010

In an unanticipated chain of events, Glenn Cobb became his 82-year-old mother's biggest hero.

On a recent summer day, Cobb put his billfold - containing his newly-earned American Heart Association CPR certification card - in his pocket and accompanied Imogene Cobb to a scheduled check-up with Battle Creek internist, Dr. Younho Chung.

Little did he know how the day would turn out.

Two weeks earlier, Cobb, 62, a self-employed computer systems analyst and child care provider for two young grandchildren, had completed the Great Start to Quality Orientation training, a required six-hour health and safety course for DHS-supported relative and aide providers.

The course includes Red Cross First Aid and American Heart Association CPR. But on this Thursday, as he drove the family, including his 2-year-old granddaughter and 3-year-old grandson, to Dr. Chung's office, there was no indication trouble was coming.

Arriving at the medical facility, Cobb dropped off his mother at the door, parked his car and headed inside, the two children in tow. As they entered the building, Cobb's mother collapsed.

"Her heart stopped. She stopped breathing literally in the doctor's office building," Cobb recalled.

Cobb ran to Chung's office and yelled for help, directing someone to call 911. He then returned to his mother's side, Dr. Chung following shortly thereafter.

Cobb started CPR by performing rescue breathing and chest compressions as he was trained to do. The doctor, using his stethoscope, checked for a pulse, but there wasn't one. The pair took turns performing chest compressions.

Cobb later said it might have been 30 seconds, or over a minute, before Dr. Chung discovered

Imogene Cobb's pulse.

"I thought she was dead, and I was on autopilot doing what I was trained to do. Her lips turned bright purple. I never realized how quickly that happens."

Soon, an ambulance crew arrived and took over. At the hospital, Imogene Cobb received a temporary pacemaker and then later that evening received a permanent one. She's now fine.

"I wouldn't have done what I did had I not had the training," Glenn Cobb said. "It was so fresh in my mind, using the mannequins and what we had learned. It was almost like second nature. I would have been a lot more scared, apprehensive and disorganized if I had not had the training."

Suzanne Pish, a family and consumer science educator for the Michigan State University Extension Office in Branch County, is the certified instructor who trained Cobb and other participants in the GSQO course.

"I remember he was very excited, as most people are, when they become CPR certified," Pish said, adding that Cobb sent her a hand-written note after the incident thanking her for teaching him the life-saving skill.

"That's awesome. It makes me feel good I taught it well enough. But I didn't think he'd put it to use in

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two weeks," she said.

Neither did Cobb.

"It's easy to say I feel blessed. I was in the right place at the right time, with the right training," he said.

The training Cobb took is provided through the Early Childhood Investment Corporation's (ECIC) Great Start Regional Child Care Resource Centers, and is mandated this year for all relative and aide child care providers receiving state subsidies through the Department of Human Services Child Development and Care Program.

The program helps low-income parents who are working or going to school with the cost of child care. (In some cases, state child care subsidies go directly to providers, in other cases they go to parents. In all cases, parents choose their provider.)

The ECIC, founded in 2005, is the state's focal point for information and investment in early childhood in Michigan. As part of ECIC's efforts to implement a comprehensive early childhood system for Michigan, it aims to improve the quality of child care in Michigan through the Great Start Child Care Quality Program.

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