

Lifesaving Awards



American Red Cross
Training Services

NOMINATE NOW

Inspiring Stories by Region

Teenage Hero Saves Friend from Choking in the New Jersey Region

Chatham High senior Kiernan Smith received the Certificate of Merit for actions he took in a restaurant to save a friend from choking. Near the end of July 2022, Smith was out to eat with friends when one of them suddenly and urgently signaled his airway was blocked using the universal sign for choking. Without hesitation, Kiernan jumped up and performed abdominal thrusts and back blows – techniques he learned during an American Red Cross lifeguard training session – to dislodge the food from his friend's airway, saving his life. The impressive details behind the save can be found on the region's [news page](#).



L to R: Red Cross Executive Director Sara Huisling, Kiernan Smith and Red Cross CEO Rosie Taravella.

Runner Responds to Calls for Help in the Illinois Region

Wojciech Wilczynski had plans to complete a 10-mile run one Saturday morning in preparation for a marathon but only reached the first mile before he collapsed on the trail. Wojciech's running partner didn't have a cell phone on him and started yelling out for help. That's when another runner, Stephanie Koklys, heard the panicked calls and ran over to call 911. Stephanie hadn't taken a lifesaving course in a long time, but the dispatcher talked her through what to do. She performed CPR for eight minutes until EMS arrived. Wojciech woke up in the hospital a few days later. The two, now friends, often run together. View the amazing [video](#) about the actions that resulted in Stephanie receiving the Certificate of Extraordinary Personal Action.



L to R: Wojciech Wilczynski and Stephanie Koklys

On-duty Employee Takes Lifesaving Action in the Indiana Region

During her shift at the wellness desk at a YMCA in Evansville, Indiana, Elise Motz heard a call for help. A fitness center member was on the floor gasping for air. Elise, who is trained in Red Cross Adult and Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED, acted swiftly, checking the scene to assess the situation. She then grabbed the fitness center's emergency bag and knelt down by the member. At this point, the member lost consciousness. With decisive action, Elise started CPR and used an AED. Thanks to Elise's immediate care and calm coordination, this member's life was saved. Executives from the Red Cross and the YMCA joined together to present Elise with a much-deserved Lifesaving Award for Professional Responders. In honor of Cardiac Arrest Awareness Month, the chapter recognized Elise in its [LinkedIn](#) post.



L to R: Crystal Paroyan, YMCA of Southwestern Indiana, District Branch Executive Director; Elise Motz, Lifesaving Award recipient; Steve Walker, American Red Cross Southwest Chapter Board Chair

Instructor Spotlight

Each month we highlight Instructors whose students have used their lifesaving training to save or sustain a life. We extend our thanks to Todd and Heidi for providing the quality training that allowed their students to save lives.

Todd Roth

Todd Roth trained Victoria and Alexandria Steward in Lifeguarding and First Aid/CPR/AED. While on vacation in Mexico, the two sisters helped to save the lives of a mother and her infant daughter who got swept out in the ocean by a wave. Without hesitation, Victoria and Alexandria dove in and brought both the victims back to shore and provided first aid to them.



Heidi Ibarra

Heidi Ibarra trained Tim Cahill in Lifeguarding and CPR/AED for Professional Rescuers. Tim was the lifeguard on duty when a gentleman swimming in the therapy pool suddenly went underwater and sank to the bottom. Tim immediately activated the emergency action plan; a fellow instructor pulled the swimmer to the side of the pool so he could be extracted. Tim quickly began CPR while his colleague retrieved the AED. Tim completed two cycles of CPR when the swimmer started to show signs of life as EMS arrived and took over caring for him.



Lifesaving Awards Vault

From the vault of the Southtown Star (Chicago, Illinois), December 16, 1982

State trooper honored for lifesaving actions

On this date in history, Scott Deubel, a state police trooper, received the Red Cross Lifesaving Award. Earlier that year, while on patrol, he observed that a motorist involved in an accident was unconscious and pulseless. Trooper Deubel immediately began to perform CPR until EMS arrived on the scene. The state police commander, the district commander and the chief of the Palos Heights, Illinois Police Department all attended the ceremony where Trooper Deubel was honored.

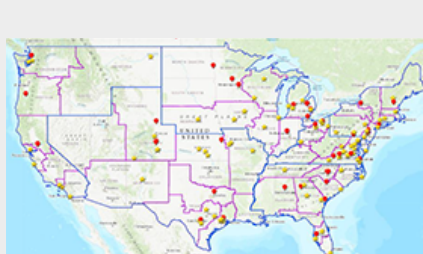


Nominate. Recognize. Inspire.

Saving Lives Starts Here

If you or someone you know has used **skills** and **knowledge** learned in a Red Cross Training Services course to help save or sustain the life of another individual, visit [LifesavingAwards.org](https://www.redcross.org/lifesavingawards) to nominate them.

Want to see if you have a local hero in your area? Take a look at our [map](#).



Get Inspired!

We're grateful for the 5+ million people who are trained in Red Cross lifesaving programs every year. Whether you're a professional responder or just want to learn how to be prepared when moments matter, the Red Cross has a course for you. Trust us to deliver unmatched lifesaving training to your business, organization, friends or family. Visit us at [redcross.org/training](https://www.redcross.org/training).