

Herker Industries employees Jason Holmes (left) and Nick Paulik (center) used their CPR skills to help coworker Kevin Ganey.

SKILLS FOR LIFE

Employees Learn CPR, Revive Coworker

You never know when a little knowledge will come in handy — especially for saving a life.

In September 2007, 16 employees from Herker Industries participated in a voluntary cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) class at Community Memorial Hospital. Last July, two of the employees — Nicolas (Nick) Paulik and Jason Holmes — used their new skills to help coworker Kevin Ganey.

Herker Industries, located in Menomonee Falls, makes precision machine parts for use in agriculture, the automotive industry, heating and cooling equipment and hydraulic equipment. The company, which has offered CPR training to employees for several years, also purchased an automated external defibrillator (AED), a device used in cases of cardiac arrest.

During a day-long program at Community Memorial, learning coordinators Jan Koleas, RN, and Cindy Johnson, RN, taught the employees how to perform CPR, use an AED and do basic first aid. On Wednesday, July 23, Nick and Jason were put to the ultimate test. Just after 5:00 pm, Kevin, 53, suddenly collapsed at work.

“I don’t remember much,” Kevin said. “It came on real sudden, and I blacked out.”

Other employees saw what had happened and sprang into action. One issued a page for Nick and Jason, who were listed as first responders at the company, while two other employees dialed 911.

“Nick had already started CPR by the time I arrived,” Jason said. “We were partners in the CPR training, and now we were partners in the real thing.”

CPR is aimed at maintaining a flow of oxygenated blood to the brain and heart through chest compressions. “I first checked for a pulse and breathing and didn’t find any,” Nick said. “I was on my second set of compressions when Jason arrived. I directed someone to get the AED, and Jason got it going. There was no response until we shocked him.”

“Everything just stops and you go into autopilot,” Jason said as he recalled helping Kevin. “The worse part for us was not knowing what would happen after he went to the hospital.”

Just after Kevin was shocked with the AED, paramedics from Menomonee Falls arrived and took Kevin to the Emergency Department at Community Memorial. He was stabilized in the Emergency Department and seen by Steve Naum, MD, a cardiologist on staff at Community Memorial.

“There was evidence that he had a small heart attack,” Dr. Naum said. Dr. Naum performed a heart catheterization, a minimally invasive procedure in which a catheter (thin flexible tube) is threaded through an artery up to the heart. A special dye is put in the catheter to show (on X-ray) if any arteries are blocked or narrowed.

“He had two significant blockages,” Dr. Naum said. “The right coronary artery was 99 percent blocked, and the left anterior descending artery was 75 percent blocked.”

To open one of the arteries, Dr. Naum performed balloon angioplasty, which involves inserting a catheter with a tiny balloon on its tip into the blocked artery. The balloon is inflated, pressing plaque against the artery wall. In the other artery, he placed a stent, a small metal tube designed to be inserted into a vessel to keep it open.

“My wife told me in the hospital that Nick and Jason had revived me,” Kevin said. Kevin later expressed his appreciation to Nick and Jason, and Herker presented them with a special plaque at the company picnic in August.

“I would encourage other companies to do what Herker has done,” Kevin said. “If this had to happen to me, this was the best place for it to occur. We have people who are qualified to step in and provide the extra needed time before the ambulance arrives.”

Kevin went home on Sunday, July 27, and returned to work on Sept. 8.

“Herker called us to let us know about what had happened,” learning coordinator Johnson said. “It’s so gratifying to know that our training efforts had this kind of result.”

If your company is interested in CPR training at Community Memorial or your workplace, please call our Organizational Development and Education department at 262-257-3240.

For individuals interested in learning CPR, please see page 22 of the Calendar for Health for a list of CPR, AED and First Aid programs.



Dr. Naum is one of 32 cardiologists on staff in the Heart and Vascular Center at Community Memorial Hospital. For scheduling information for Dr. Naum, or to learn more about the specialty physicians in our Heart and Vascular Center, contact Careconnection at 262-251-1001 or 800-246-8332.