

Friends

A quarterly newsletter for our donors and supporters

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Did you know?



St John

first to care

ISSUE 2

SOUTH ISLAND REGION

SPRING 2011

First aid training pays ultimate dividend

Mary Johnstone is more than thankful that her daughter, Rachel, is a young woman alive and well. Mary literally saved her life when Rachel suffered an asthma-related respiratory arrest and her heart stopped beating.

It was a situation no parent wants to experience but the reality for Mary was either do something or lose her daughter. Over the years Mary has undertaken electrical first aid courses and it was this knowledge that allowed her to swing into action on a cold, winter day. To make matters worse, there was heavy snow and Mary's home was in an isolated South Otago location, making access by road ambulance virtually impossible. Mary knew that the Otago Rescue Helicopter would arrive but her intervention was going to give Rachel her best chance of survival.

"I knew that the ambulance wouldn't be able to get through and there would be a wait until the helicopter arrived," says Mary.

"I asked my other daughter to phone 111 and this was an absolute life-line. Phone contact was 100% essential even though I had done first aid training."

Mary was looking for signs of life and was very conscious of keeping Rachel's airway clear. For between 30 and 45 minutes Mary performed CPR while waiting for paramedics to arrive.

It was a physically challenging ordeal but according to Mary there was no other option. "Something takes over. You can't stop and you cut out everything else."

You can imagine Mary's relief when the Balclutha ambulance crew arrived (courtesy of a Police 4WD

vehicle) and soon after the rescue helicopter.

"I was pretty terrified but it was good to see her starting to look more like herself once she was put on the helicopter. She has age on her side and she is fit."

Rachel spent two days in the Intensive Care Unit in Dunedin Hospital before being moved to a general ward for a further few days. Rachel is now back home and making a remarkable recovery.

For Mary, the ordeal is something she wouldn't wish on anyone and she is definitely an advocate for first aid training. Mary would like to see a law change being made so that it is compulsory for everyone to do first aid training when they renew their driver's license.

"It would be a simple way of ensuring that many New Zealanders had the necessary skills to react in life-threatening situations and be competent to provide first aid. A two-hour first aid course that taught skills such as CPR, and how to deal with heavy bleeding could mean saving more lives."



PERFORMING CPR CAN MEAN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH

The year in review

There is no denying that the February earthquake in Canterbury will be the defining moment for 2011 for many, not least St John.

Our ambulance officers were called on in the most extreme circumstances and what they did and what they endured is to be commended.

Our work throughout the South Island continues to grow and expand with new services being offered and an increasing number of people requiring our help.

As a charity we rely on the generosity of people like yourself who continue to support St John. Your financial assistance is needed now more than ever.

Because of the shortfall in government funding an additional \$14 million is needed this year with this figure likely to continue to grow.

As the country's population ages demand on our services grows. In the previous year we treated over 100,000 patients in the South Island alone and almost



ST JOHN AMBULANCE OFFICERS WORK IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES FOLLOWING THE FEBRUARY EARTHQUAKE

400,000 throughout New Zealand. With our other community services we are touching the lives of many more people.

Your support is vital and we thank you very much.

Have a safe and happy Christmas.

First aid myths busted

In a two-part series St John debunks some first aid myths (part two will follow in the Summer 2012 edition).

Myth: It's better to do nothing than risk making things worse

If it is a life or death situation (for example someone has stopped breathing or their heart has stopped beating) and you do nothing, the person will die.

Often people fear doing something wrong and worry if they do something it could risk making things worse, but in reality doing something is far more likely to help the person than to harm them.

Myth: If you have a nosebleed, you should tilt your head back

Tilting a person's head back when they have a nose bleed is unhelpful and just results in the blood going down the back of their throat.

Instead, lean forward pinching the soft part of the nose firmly for 10-20 minutes. Call 111 for an ambulance and keep pinching the nose if the bleeding is severe and doesn't stop after 20 minutes.

Myth: The best thing for a burn is butter

Butter doesn't cool the burn, and can increase risk of infection.

Use cool water to pour on the burn (or soak the injured part in cool water). Keep cooling for 20 minutes.

Myth: If an arm or leg is bleeding heavily, you should tie a tourniquet above the injury.

Applying a tourniquet can make the bleeding worse and can cause even more damage. The best thing to do is apply firm direct pressure to the wound. Cover the wound with a dressing once the bleeding has been controlled.

Myth: You must never, ever move someone after a car crash, even if they are not breathing.

In this situation, a lot of people worry about spinal injuries and the risk of paralysing someone if they are moved.

But if they are not breathing, they will die unless you move them. If someone is not breathing, you have to move them so you can start CPR. This gives the person a chance of surviving, whereas not moving them means they will have no chance.

However, when a person is breathing, they should not be moved unless they are in immediate danger.

In severe medical situations call 111 and ask for an ambulance.

St John receives a \$2.8 million grant

St John has received a \$2.8 million grant from the Christchurch Earthquake Appeal Trust.

Dave Thomas, General Manager St John South Island Region, thanked the Trust for the generous acknowledgement of the key role St John has played in Christchurch since the September earthquake.

"The one year anniversary of the September earthquake was a chance for everyone in Christchurch and Canterbury to reflect on the difficult year we've had," said Dave. "This includes charities like St John."

Since 4 September 2010 St John has, like many organisations and individuals, suffered a considerable loss and strain on its resources.

"Although the earthquakes were devastating, they did show how important it is for the community to prepare for any major crisis, and that includes St John," he says.

An audit of our equipment and resources following the

February earthquake showed that over \$3 million was required to replace damaged and lost equipment.

"The \$2.8 million grant is a significant contribution towards that total. It will specifically support our mass casualty incident (MCI) deployment and augments our capacity to deal with incidents of this nature, as well as any future event."

St John will use the grant to purchase important equipment including ambulances, stretchers, protective gear for ambulance officers and advanced communications equipment.

"It's important to note, however, that St John is a charity, and as a whole the organisation must still fundraise and use profit from its commercial activities to make up the shortfall in ambulance funding (\$14 million this financial year) as well as fund its community programmes. This is separate from this grant."

Relieved dad gets a chance to say thanks

When Chris Bond's young son, Liam, suddenly started shaking violently, Chris was very scared.

"All of a sudden his eyes just glazed over, he went as stiff as a board and he started shaking incredibly violently," Chris told *The Press*.

Chris called 111 and was connected to St John Southern Communications Centre Operator Wendy Beaven.

"It was the worst moment of my life," said Chris. "I thought my only child was going to die in my arms, but she did a remarkable job with a very panicked father."

Wendy was able to calm him on that terrifying June night, and diagnose Liam with a febrile convulsion, which can occur when a child's temperature rises rapidly.

Wendy relayed the information to St John ambulance staff as they travelled to Bond's Lincoln home.

She remained on the phone to Chris, reassuring him and giving advice on how to help his son as he waited for the ambulance.

Fortunately, the youngster has since made a full recovery. Chris recently took his son to meet Wendy at the St John Emergency Ambulance Communications Centre in Christchurch.

"I wanted to bring Liam in to give her a high five and say 'thanks' for the amazing work. She says she was just doing her job, but they really care about the people at the end of the phone."



CHRIS AND LIAM BOND VISIT WENDY BEAVEN AT THE ST JOHN COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE IN CHRISTCHURCH

St John Supporter Scheme

Being a St John Supporter brings benefits to you and your loved ones in many ways.

If you require an ambulance for a medical emergency and you are a Supporter you won't receive an invoice to cover some of the costs incurred with your treatment. If you have other people living with you, these people will also benefit in the same way.

As a charity, St John relies on the financial support of people like you. St John Supporters help our organisation provide the best possible delivery of both ambulance and our community services.

The St John Supporter Scheme has two membership options available to choose from. If you are not a St John Supporter, why not consider becoming one today?

The two options are:

- Individuals pay \$35 a year
- Households pay \$55 a year which covers every person in the household.

Call us on 0800 STJOHN (0800 785 646) to join. By becoming a St John Supporter you will help maintain St John services in your community and make it possible for us to develop more services in the future.

Did you know?

Taking calls and providing care

- The number of urgent calls to our communications centre has increased from 353,385 to 386,083 in the last year (July 2010 – June 2011) – an increase of 9% on the previous year.
- St John attended more than 336,000 medical emergencies – a 9% increase on the previous year.
- We treated and transported more than 395,000 patients – a 6.6% increase on the previous year.
- The number of patients taken to emergency departments has increased between 6-10% every year over the last few years.
- More than 4,000 St John members provide emergency ambulance and patient transfer services – nearly 64% of them volunteer their time and expertise.



➤ We welcome your support

If you would like to make a donation please call **0800 ST JOHN (0800 785 646)**

An automatic \$20 donation can be made through your phone bill by calling 0900 STJOHN (0900 785 646)

Or visit www.stjohn.org.nz and click on make a donation online

Contact us on **0800 ST JOHN (0800 785 646)**

- to advise us of changes to your address or phone details
- to make a donation
- to volunteer for St John or find out more about how St John works within your community

www.stjohn.org.nz

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St John
 first to care

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