

# Firefighters honoured for saving lives

Several firefighters were honoured recently during an Evening of Recognition hosted by Halton Hills Fire Department for their efforts in saving the lives of two men.

Firefighters Geoff Heinz, Peter Palmer and Peter Faria were honoured for saving the life of Allan Erski at Mold-Masters SportsPlex last April.

On April 22 at approximately 9 p.m., during an adult ball hockey game, one of the players collapsed with a cardiac arrest.

A player from the opposing team, Geoff Heinz, immediately rushed to the man's side. Heinz, a Mississauga firefighter and former Halton Hills firefighter, checked the patient's heart and breathing. His heart was erratic.

Heinz then rolled him over onto his back. By this time two off-duty Halton Hills firefighters, Peter Palmer and Peter Faria, who were at the arena watching their kids play hockey, were at the man's side.

They cut open Erski's shirt and on the first analysis, the defibrillator said to shock, and so they did. Heinz felt for a pulse, but couldn't find one. They continued with compressions. Heinz noticed Erski's arm move so compressions were stopped and Erski was checked for a pulse. This time Heinz found one.

The firefighters monitored Erski and waited for an ambulance to arrive. Background medical information such as any allergies was gathered from Erski's teammates while waiting for the paramedics.

By the time the ambulance arrived Erski started to come around. He was confused but responded verbally when asked his name.

"This was truly a team effort. One person called 911, another grabbed the defibrillator and another waited at the doors for the ambulance," said Halton Hills Deputy CAO and Fire Chief Brent Marshall at the ceremony.

"Thanks to the rapid and professional reactions of Geoff Heinz, Peter Palmer and Peter Faria, Mr. Erski is with us tonight," said Marshall.

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Several other firefighters were recognized for saving the life of Rick Hoare during the 2013 ice storm.



Two Halton Hills firefighters and a Mississauga firefighter were recognized for saving the life of Allan Erski last April. On hand for the presentation of the awards were from left Deputy CAO and Fire Chief Brent Marshall, Mayor Rick Bonnette, Firefighter Peter Palmer, Allan Erski, Firefighter Peter Faria, (Mississauga) Firefighter Geoff Heinz and Councillor Bryan Lewis, Chair of Fire Services & Emergency Planning Committee.

Photo by Jon Borjstrom

On Saturday, Dec. 21 100 per cent of power was out in the town and fire crews were responding to dozens of calls— falling trees, power lines lying across roads, vehicle accidents, evacuations of vulnerable residents to warming shelters, road closures, limited visibility and exhausted firefighters.

"The ice storm of 2013 had its challenges for the entire community, but on this night, at approximately 9 p.m., our firefighters showed what it means to be a hero," said Marshall.

Lt. Tim Maud and firefighter Chris Aitken were on duty that night in one of the department's pick-up trucks. They were assigned to closing roads with power lines down. While on King St. they heard the urgent cries from a nearby home and rushed over.

Upon arrival, they found a man lying face down on the floor. Maud immediately called for assistance.

With only the light from flashlights and candles, Maud and Aitken monitored the patient and prepared the scene for emergency crews to arrive.

Hearing the call for assistance, Pump 3, crewed by Captain Charlie Hancock, Assistant Captain Mark Burger, and firefighters Hugh Hennessey and Brian Nelles, responded to the call.

When they got near, they encountered power lines lying across the road, stopping them short of the house.

When Hancock's crew arrived, Maud reported the patient was unconscious but breathing and had a pulse.

At that time, Hancock assumed command and the

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