

QUICK RESPONSE VITAL TO SURVIVAL: PARAMEDIC

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talking to others.

The 27-year-old Georgetown woman left home that morning with the couple's newborn daughter, Veronica. She was taking a short walk to meet Miles when she stopped outside their house.

"I was chatting with our neighbour and he said I was laughing and then it was like I just turned off and I fell," Anastasiya said. "There were no warning signs."

Fortunately, Veronica was in a car seat which protected her from the fall. Anastasiya, though, was experiencing ventricular fibrillation, an irregular heartbeat where the heart twitches, preventing it from pumping blood to the body.

When the Kaczmareks

were moving a year ago, they worried about buying a house on a busy four-lane road with two young kids. They eventually decided they could not pass on the house. That would prove to be a fortuitous decision.

Chris Giles and his wife were driving home after getting ice cream when they saw Anastasiya lying on the sidewalk. Giles got out of his car and rushed to her side.

"She was in serious need of immediate emergency treatment," he said. "She had no pulse and she wasn't breathing."

Giles, who served as a paratrooper in the Canadian military and worked as a police officer for 30 years, was trained in and had performed CPR before. He started performing chest compressions.

Miles, just a few minutes

from home when he made the call, rushed home.

"There's just so much fear and anxiety," he said. "You don't know what you're going to find when you get there."

Giles continued to perform compressions until paramedics and firefighters arrived and took over treating Anastasiya.

"The EMS and firefighters, they provide the advanced life-saving treatment she needed to give her a fighting chance," Giles said. "CPR, that's the bridge to get her there."

November is CPR month and the Canadian Red Cross encourages people to get training on how to administer CPR.

Paul Lamey, public safety education co-ordinator in paramedic services for Halton Region, said a quick response with CPR makes a

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- Anastasiya Kaczmarek

big difference in survival rates.

"Every minute (without CPR) results in a seven to 10 per cent decrease in the chance of survival."

According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation, eight out of 10 cardiac events happen outside of a hospital. Chest compressions alone can be effective in helping circulate the blood and carry oxygen to the body.

"CPR helps provide oxygen to the brain and organs. That's crucial," Lamey said. "If you're not sure about providing breaths, just use

chest compressions."

Anastasiya was in a coma for three days afterward.

"That was the darkest part of it," Miles said. "We didn't know how she was going to be cognitively."

Apart from memory loss around the incident, Anastasiya has made a full recovery. She had surgery to implant a cardioverter defibrillator.

"I still don't have an answer about why it happened," she said.

The Kaczmareks praised the emergency response, from paramedics

and firefighters responding on the scene to the doctors and nurses who treated her in the hospital. But both are sure without Giles stepping in to perform CPR in those first minutes, the outcome would not have been as positive.

"There's nothing we can ever do to thank him enough, except explain how grateful we are," Anastasiya said. "I'm going to see my daughters grow up because of what he did."

STORY BEHIND THE STORY: November is CPR month. Each year, 35,000 Canadians go into cardiac arrest and knowing how to perform CPR properly can increase the chances of survival. With that in mind, we wanted to share how CPR was instrumental in saving a local woman recently.



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