

Man's Heart Stops For 10 Minutes, Here's Why He's Alive Today

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MILFORD, CT — Meet Sean Hitchcock, 53. He's only alive today because numerous people did everything perfectly and brought him back to life after his heart stopped for up to 10 minutes the day prior to Thanksgiving.

It's fair to say that Hitchcock has a lot to be thankful for and on Monday morning he returned to the office, Prolete Physical Therapy and New Haven Rheumatology, where he suffered a heart attack in the waiting room while his son, Trevor, 17, was present.

Hitchcock fell to the floor and Dr. Elise M. Carlson and staff from both medical offices rushed into action and performed CPR on Hitchcock. Carlson grabbed an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), which was in the office and after about 10 minutes, Hitchcock was brought back to life.

"The biggest thing for me is I'm extremely thankful for everyone involved who did everything so quickly," Hitchcock said Monday. "When my heart stopped, time is of the essence. Everyone did their part. The communication was fantastic."

Carlson recalls asking Hitchcock what his name is after he regained consciousness and when he answered correctly he said, "it's the best thing I heard all day." Hitchcock said he never wanted to suffer a heart attack but at least it happened at a place full of medical staff that know CPR and most importantly had access to an AED.

The Milford Fire Department held a press conference Monday at 247 Broad Street, which is where Hitchcock's life was saved. Battalion Chief Thomas A. Thornberg said if it weren't for the quick

action of numerous staff and the use of the AED, Hitchcock wouldn't be here today. "When the fire department paramedic and EMT had looked and saw their patient, they could hardly believe their eyes; they saw the patient with both eyes open and confused," Thornberg said. Firefighters took Hitchcock to the hospital where he was treated and made a full recovery.

Another Hero Steps Forward

When Mike Papale was 17-years-old in 2005 he suffered a heart attack while teaching youths at a basketball camp. Fortunately, an EMT was nearby and delivered a shock that saved his life. Grateful that his life was saved, Papale wanted to make a difference and he began by volunteering with the American Heart Association.

He helped lobby to get two bills passed in Connecticut mandating defibrillators be placed in all public schools. In 2014, Papale needed emergency open heart surgery to fix ongoing issues he suffered as a teen.

While in the hospital, Papale decided he needed to do more and it led him to form the "In A Heartbeat Foundation." The foundation raises money and awareness for sudden cardiac arrest and Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy, and to spread the word about the importance of CPR and the use of AEDs.

Donations raised by "In A Heartbeat Foundation" led to the purchase of 177 AEDs that have been placed in locations. Ironically, one of the AEDs donated by "In A Heartbeat Foundation" was the one that saved Hitchcock's life. "All of the stars were in a line that day before Thanksgiving and each person involved had a vital part in saving the life of Sean," Thornberg said.

"The importance of calling 911, starting hands only CPR, applying and using an AED are just as if not more important in increasing the survivability of sudden cardiac arrest," Thornberg added.

[You can read more about the In A Heartbeat Foundation here.](#)

