A Clarkstown police 911 dispatcher is being credited today with helping a frantic mother save the life of her 1-year-old boy who had stopped breathing after falling into the New City family's pool Tuesday.

Police and emergency medical officials said the dispatcher's calm and professional response to a panicked call for help was key to walking the mother through CPR steps that brought her son back to life.

The child, who was in the backyard with his 7-year-old sister, fell into the pool of the home at 6 Orient Court at about 5 p.m. when his 35-year-old mother had stepped inside the house for a minute, said Clarkstown Lt. Anthony Ovchinnikoff. The mother heard her daughter's screams for help and raced out to the pool, where she discovered the boy in the water, Ovchinnikoff said.

The 7-year-old girl was able to hold her brother's head above water until her mother could rush over to help. Ovchinnikoff said that as the mother pulled the boy out of the pool, the 7-year-old dialed 911 for help and got through to Clarkstown dispatcher Beverly Brooks, a 21-year veteran of the police department.

Ovchinnikoff, who listened to the department's recordings of the 911 call, said Brooks was able to get the frightened 7-year-old to give her key information about the emergency as police officers and paramedics were alerted to the incident. What Brooks quickly found out was that the boy was not breathing and had started turning blue.

"Dispatcher Brooks was able to have the daughter get the mother on the phone, and she then began to give the mother instructions," Ovchinnikoff said.

He explained that Brooks realized that the mother, in her panic, was improperly applying CPR techniques to the child. "The mother was breathing too hard, she had to give two quick breaths to the baby," Ovchinnikoff said.

Within the estimated three minutes it took for police officers and members of Rockland Paramedics to get to the home, Ovchinnikoff said the mother, with guidance from Brooks, was able to get the child to vomit up water and begin breathing on his own.

Police did not identify the family by name.

Raymond Florida, executive director of Rockland Paramedics, said the boy was checked at the home and then taken to Nyack Hospital by members of the New City Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Corps. "It's my understanding that the boy is doing very well," Florida said.

Florida said that when paramedics arrived the boy was screaming very loudly.

"That's always a very good sign when a child is screaming like that when you've had a near drowning," Florida said.

Ovchinnikoff said that after the boy was safely at the hospital, the paramedics who had assisted in the incident called the police department to cite Brooks' efforts as having helped save the boy.

In preparation for situations just like this one, Ovchinnikoff said Clarkstown's police dispatchers all receive special training that teaches them how to gather key information and provide life-saving instructions.

Clarkstown police Captain Michael Sullivan said the methods used by the 911 dispatchers take advantage of the few minutes between a call coming in and the arrival of police and medical personnel to assess the condition of someone with a medical emergency and provide instructions to a friend or family member who may be there.
Clarkstown dispatchers use special books that give them the step-by-step directions they need to pass along. At the same time, the department’s computerized dispatching system allows the 911 dispatchers to provide updates to police officers and medical personnel while they are still on the line with the caller.

The police department is currently in the process of updating its facilities for its dispatchers at police headquarters at 20 Maple Ave., New City.

SEE NEXT IN POLICE & FIRE

Police Seek Driver Who Struck, Injured New City Bicyclist

COMMENTS (6)

Deborah N Lurie
7:28am on Wednesday, September 1, 2010
Thank you, Dispatcher Brooks. You have helped to save not just one life, but generations.

Katie Ryan O’Connor
8:34am on Wednesday, September 1, 2010
Great job Ms. Brooks!

Easton King
10:27am on Wednesday, September 1, 2010
What an amazing outcome! Great job by everyone!! So happy this had a happy ending due to the work of Dispatcher Brooks!

teresa a Hamilton
4:25pm on Wednesday, September 1, 2010
Beverly: You and your fellow dispatchers, Brian and Doris are a credit to your profession!! However, Beverly—The fact that you WERE the one to answer the call makes you a Hero! Congratulations to each of you and WAY TO GO BEVERLY!!!!

Kathy
4:39pm on Wednesday, September 1, 2010
Now that’s a great story

Samaritan
4:51pm on Wednesday, September 1, 2010
It’s just like that US Air pilot who landed the plane on the Hudson. Training and professionalism win the day. It is sad when that doesn’t happen, witness “Officer“ Mendez in Brooklyn and that poor girl who died of an asthma attack because the cop was not trained in CPR and evidently too panicked to do anything.