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# Arcadia WEEKLY



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## Pediatric Patient Survives Rare Heart Failure



-Photos By Terry Miller

### Arcadia Fire Dept., Methodist Hospital and Children's Hospital Team to Save Two-Year-Old

BY TERRY MILLER AND ANN AZER

On December 20 of last year Arcadia Fire Department Engines 105 and RA 105 were called to a business in Arcadia where they found a two-year old girl who had no pulse and was not breathing. Rapidly assessing the child, paramedics immediately began CPR and attached her to a portable monitor. When they placed her on the monitor, they discovered that she was in Ventricular Fibrillation. This is a life threatening dysrhythmia which is very rare in children. Without immediate treatment, the chances of survival rapidly diminish. In response the paramedics, Drew Pryor and Charlie Tuggle, immediately performed defibrillation which "shocked" her heart back into a regular and life sustaining rhythm.

"She was grey," said Pryor. "I'll never forget that day. All the while we were treating [Ashley] her mom was obviously distraught, screaming 'my baby's dying'."

As not only a paramedic and firefighter but also a father of two, Pryor recognized the grave danger this young girl was facing.

Sue Whiting answered the

radio call at Methodist Hospital.

"A pediatric patient who suffers a cardiac arrest is every MICN's fear when they answer the radio." The call between Arcadia Fire Paramedic Drew Pryor and RN Sue Whiting was professional and calm.

On arrival at Methodist, Lito Sing, her nurse, ordered a breathing tube to be placed to assist her breathing. She continued to have dysrhythmias and sustained a second cardiac arrest in the emergency room which required a second defibrillation.

The team of pediatric specialists was ready when they arrived the short distance and the entire team went into a collective overdrive.

Meanwhile specialists at Children's Hospital in Los Angeles had been alerted of the child's condition and were sending a team to transport her to their renowned facility.

According to hospital staff and firefighters, this case was one in a million. Truly one for the record books.

Prior to the brief ceremony at Methodist Hospital on Monday, Ashley had the opportunity

to visit all the firefighters who helped her that day, for which her mother, Leydi, will be eternally grateful. Lunch of fish and chicken tacos and very special cupcakes was served in the firefighter's kitchen at Station 105 and then the whole family got a ride in a fire engine to the Hospital for more goodies and to celebrate Ashley's life.

During lunch, Ashley's brother Christian, 21, told the Weekly how his life was those few weeks following the heart attack. His 21st birthday plans (slated for Dec. 28) were put on hold during

this family crisis. He said "All I wanted for my birthday was for Ashley to recover fully. That would be the best present ever". The family from Roland Heights was visiting a friend for his second birthday party in Arcadia the day of the incident.

Methodist Hospital recognized the outstanding teamwork demonstrated by the Arcadia firefighters, EMS (paramedics) John Twitchell, Ken Valentine, Joe Herrick, Charlie Tuggle and Drew Pryor as well as the entire nursing staff at Methodist Hospital that ultimately saved this two-year-old girl against all odds.

The good news is that the young girl was discharged from Children's Hospital L.A. in the second week of January without any neurological deficit.

Patient and mother, Dr Koenig who is the medical director of the EMS Agency, Chief Tony Trabbie of the Arcadia Fire Department as well as Deputy Chief Hany, Battalion Chief Spriggs, Arcadia firefighters, EMS personnel and Methodist Hospital nursing staff were recognized as well as other members of the remarkable team.

At the conclusion of the brief ceremony Leydi Canton, while holding her daughter Ashley, tried to wipe away the tears of joy she was shedding as she thanked all who helped her daughter recover.

"You gave me my baby back! Thank you from the bottom of my heart. May God Bless each and every one of you," cried Canton in thanks.

Ashley spent four weeks in the hospital recovering with apparently no ill effects and is now wearing a defibrillator and pacemaker that will have to be checked every four years for battery replacement.

She will also be on some medication for the rest of her life, according to her mother, and will have to limit her physical activities - that may mean no P.E. for her when she becomes school age.

Needless to say, the family is deeply grateful for her miraculous recovery and ever-mindful of Ashley's activity level.

