NEW ZEALAND
Resuscitation Council
WHAKAHAUORA AOTEAROA

Neil's Story: “You don’t think you’ll need it until one day you do - get the training before you need to use it".



Neil is sharing his experiences as a first-aider as a part of the New Zealand Resuscitation Council’s World Restart a Heart campiagn, to encourage New Zealanders to learn CPR and save lives.

Neil isn’t someone who has gone looking for emergencies and sees his experiences as partly bad luck, but has found himself in postions where his help has been needed to save a life.

One of the situations where Neil has used his first aid and CPR training was when he was waiting to pick up his mother from a train that was running late. He and his wife decided to grab a bite to eat during delay. They decided that a local pub would be an convienient choice, however they found that the kitchen was closed. They considered going elsewhere, but instead decided to go into the gaming room and put a couple of dollars in a Pokie Machine. In the gaming room there were two men sitting at either end. Neil noticed one of the men sitting not looking at but above the pokie machine.

Neil asked the other man if he knew how long the man had been sitting there, to which he didnt know, and Neil tapped the man on the shoulder. He was cold, clammy and slightly gasping for air. Neil knew he needed to start CPR.

The man was in cardiac arrest. The other man and Neil helped him on to the ground, and Neil began compressions. Neil's wife went to alert bar staff to call 111 and she went to the street to flag down help.

Help came quick, a police car, a fire truck, an ambulance, and a GoodSAM responder with an AED all arrived in the time it took Neil to do two rounds of CPR. Neil was in the right place at the right time, and so were emergency services.

Neil has been in the right place a couple of other times, having done CPR on a drowning child about 20 years ago at a swimming pool, saving the childs life. “A three or four year old child was found face down in water by her mother, I heard a commotion and went to see if I could help. The mother was inconsolable with the child in her arms. I said, give her to me. I cleared her airways, gave her a couple of quick puffs, put her on her side and away she went.”

Neil has also witnessed two heart attacks. “I've been around two other people who have had heart attacks. I called an ambulance for one and took the other one to hospital myself. It was really obvious in both situations that they were having a heart attack, they didn't look well at

all”.

“One was a total stranger who collapsed in the middle of the pedestrian crossing in front of me. She thought she was fine, but I called an ambulance anyway. And the other person was a colleague who was an older man who didnt want to go to hospital but I drove him myself”.

Members of the public go to first-aid courses hoping they’ll never have to use their training. Neil has had to use his in more situations than anyone would hope to, including Neil. Neil is simply the sort of person who cares enough to step in if he notices something or someone is not alright.

In talking about the importance of his first aid training he said he purely went to a course because of work, but now he can really emphasize the importance of going.

"It's half a day out of your life and makes a huge difference to someone else, at least if you've got some idea of what to do. You don’t think you’ll need it until one day you do - get the training before you need to use it".