



Saint Louis County

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Ross Litman
Sheriff

NEWS RELEASE

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St. Louis County Sheriff recognizes large group for lifesaving teamwork

A family gathering in White Township south of Aurora came dangerously close to a tragic ending last August. Thankfully, numerous people – some volunteers, others professionals – jumped into action and worked together to save Gary Kainz from drowning. Those people, 29 in all, include the man's family members, volunteer fire fighters, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), law enforcement, air medical personnel and 911 dispatchers. Together they will be honored with 911 Life Saver Awards by Sheriff Ross Litman. The recognition event will take place next Tuesday, May 14, at the St. Louis County Board meeting, which begins at 9:30 a.m. on the second floor of the St. Louis County Courthouse in Duluth.

Gary Kainz had been swimming with his 12-year-old grandson, Brandon, and other family members at the Loon Lake Boat Landing last August 2. When Gary failed to resurface, Brandon dove down in search of him. He found him, but needed help to pull him to the surface. Gary's brother-in-law, Charles Mattson, dove in and helped pull him to shore where Gary's wife, Carol Kainz, began performing CPR. A call was made to 911, and Carol and Charles continued with CPR until first responders arrived.

As luck would have it, the Palo Volunteer Fire Department was meeting that day to train on ARMER equipment. They and Hoyt Lakes Ambulance immediately were dispatched, and once they arrived, they took over CPR until a Lifelink III Helicopter landed. A State Patrol Officer who lives nearby also came to assist, as did St. Louis County Sheriff's Deputies and a Gilbert Police Officer. Gary was flown to Essentia Health - St. Mary's Medical Center in Duluth where he was initially placed on life support. Thankfully, he soon regained consciousness and was home by the following evening.

“It is nothing short of amazing to think about how many people were willing to pitch in however they could to save this man’s life,” said Sheriff Ross Litman. “It is an honor to recognize Brandon, Charles, Carol and everyone else who responded to and assisted at the scene.”

Among those being honored with 911 Life Saver Awards are: Brandon Kainz, Charles Mattson and Carol Kainz; Palo Fire Department members Matt Baudek, Dale Erickson, Mike Lesar, Mike Skinner, Greg Hinsz, Eric Korpela, Jerrud Paul, Jesse Tennison and Trent Bailey; Lakeland Fire Department member Dan Mackey; Hoyt Lakes Ambulance members Tony House, Pete Wolner, Melissa Skelton, Joe Sykora and Josh Berndt; Minnesota State Patrol Officer Pete Goman; Gilbert Police Officer Kevin Greene, Lifelink III Air Medical members Anthony Sundholm, Kenneth Slatten and Robert Vetscher; Lt. Edward Kippley and Deputy Jesse Richter from the St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office; and St. Louis County 911 Emergency Communication Specialists Anne Lasky, Ryan Stauber, Nanette Blom and Joyce Hill.

Since 1993, St. Louis County has recognized the efforts of those individuals who have worked together, often risking their own safety, to save others. The 911 Life Saver Award honors those worthy of such recognition, but also serves to educate the public on how the County’s 911 system works.

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