

Training, Quick Actions Save a Girl's Life

By Benjamin Hoak

Seconds stretch into minutes, minutes drag into an eternity. When will they get here? C`mon, c`mon, c`mon. Down, up, down, up. Check airway. Breathe into her mouth. Down, up, down, up.

Then, finally, a faint breath. Then another shallow breath, but enough to know – she`s fighting to make it back. She`s not giving up.

The ambulance arrives, siren wailing, paramedics running to the backyard, where they kneel over the little 3-year-old girl. Ben Moore backs off, duty done, and waits.

Quick Actions



A few hours earlier on April 12, Ben Moore, Operator III, Americus, KS, had been looking forward to hanging out with his lifelong buddy – Josh Hamlin, along with his wife Lea and their two kids – for the evening. When he got to their house in Americus, they were also watching their 3-year old niece, Leni Broddle, who had been throwing up most of the day.

While the family played in the backyard, Leni passed out in her aunt`s arms. The Hamlin`s 4-year old daughter started to get upset, so Moore took her inside to calm her down with cartoons. When he turned around, he saw Lea giving CPR to Leni while Josh called 911.

As a Southern Star employee, Moore had refreshed his CPR certification through the American Red Cross just a week and a half before. He ran outside, where he took over CPR and mouth-to-mouth. (Lea had last been certified several years before.)

Moore continued CPR for six or seven minutes before a sheriff`s deputy arrived to help with compressions while Moore kept on with mouth-to-mouth. “By the time the ambulance got there, we got her breathing again,” he said. “They were tiny breaths.”

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He didn't have time to think about anything other than pure mechanics. "I was counting, making sure I was getting my compressions deep enough, getting air in," he said. "I was focused on that."

The paramedics rushed Leni to the hospital in Emporia, where she experienced several seizures before being stabilized for a flight to Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City.

Treatment and Recovery

Shortly after birth, Leni Broddle was diagnosed with a congenital heart defect called Tetralogy of Fallot – a series of defects repaired with open heart surgery when she was six weeks old. Leni later needed her heart rhythm reset and had to take medication to keep that rhythm stable. The episode at the Hamlin's home turned out to be the result of an inadvertent overdose of her medication.

Her parents, Luke and Cori, met her at Children's Mercy in Kansas City, where her heart and breathing stopped again before doctors revived her. After a few days of difficult treatment to flush the medicine out of her system, doctors performed a cardiac ablation to fix an atrial flutter (abnormal heart rhythm).

Because her heart still did not beat enough on its own after this procedure, they implanted a pacemaker to permanently control her heartbeat.

Despite surgery and medication (morphine withdrawal was challenging), Leni recovered more quickly than doctors expected and went home after three weeks. She will need a pacemaker replacement in a few years, but for now she is "once again running and bouncing off the walls most days," her parents write in her [CaringBridge Journal](#).

#HealAngry



As Moore and others followed Leni's daily journal updates, their support played a large role in Leni's recovery. The Broddles live in Wichita and avidly followed the Wichita State Shockers' Final Four run this Spring. The family adapted the team's passionate rally cry – "Play Angry!" – for Leni. As the Broddles write, "We love the Shockers and Leni loves 'Shock Ball' so it fit. Leni needs to heal and her coach would want her to heal with anger. She is battling with force. #HealAngry"

Just like that, a slogan was born. #HealAngry became an ideal Twitter hashtag (a catchy way to group updates so everyone can follow along), and T-shirts with the motto started selling quickly. People wearing the shirts sent pictures to show their support. ([See photos here.](#))

ESPN college basketball analyst Jay Bilas picked up the trend by tweeting, "Go Leni!! #HealAngry," and one of Wichita State's players, Carl Hall, participated with this photo:



No Brain Damage

Testing at Children's Mercy determined that Leni's oxygen deprivation did not result in any brain damage. Without Moore's quick actions, that outcome could have been much worse.

His involvement in her life is not over yet. Her parents have expressed their appreciation to him and he will likely meet them on June 8, when he is helping organize a benefit softball tournament (complete with silent auction) to raise money for Leni's medical bills.

Moore is glad for his ingrained training. Since he joined Southern Star almost five years ago, he has taken CPR training five times. He learned techniques for adults and children, but "just because it's a kid, it messes with you," he said. "It's a lot more emotional than you think it would be. I run that scenario in my head a thousand times a day."

Due in part to his involvement, the scenario has a happy ending. "I really don't care for any recognition for this," he said. "Leni deserves all the credit. She is a 3-year old girl who was tough enough to keep fighting for herself. She could have given up and didn't."

Thankfully for her, he didn't either.

UPDATE: SGA Meritorious Award

Southern Star submitted Ben Moore for a Meritorious Award from the Southern Gas Association (even though he didn't want recognition). As their website says:

"The SGA Meritorious Award is designed to recognize industry employee(s) who display courageous actions to save or attempt to save lives. If possible, the courageous action should be related to the training provided by member companies."

SGA voted to give Ben Moore the award, which they will announce at their Environmental, Safety & Health, and Training Conference the first week of June. Congrats to Ben!