



## CASE STUDY

Of the 150,000 items in an Illinois specialty discount retailer, only one could help save a life



### An AED Helps Revive a Retail Clerk

On July 10, 2012, 62-year-old Francis Mitchell, a retail store clerk at Blain's Farm & Fleet, in Ottawa, Illinois, was talking with her colleague Janet about her upcoming retirement in less than a month when she suddenly experienced a seizure and collapsed. Janet caught her mid-fall while two other associates reacted immediately by calling 911 and summoning the store manager, Carl Summers.

Carl, a 25-year veteran of Blain's, rushed to the back of the 133,000-square-foot store where Francis was lying on a flat cart. Twice trained by the company in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), he instructed Janet to run up front to get the AED from the customer service desk. Courtney Clements, a cashier also trained in CPR, saw what was happening and ran to help. She checked Francis' pulse. There was none. Carl noticed Francis' color was changing. He quickly turned on the ZOLL® AED Plus® and attached the electrode pads.

Within four minutes of the collapse, the AED Plus was analyzing the victim's heart rhythm. Within seconds, a shock was advised. After the shock was delivered, the AED Plus prompted Carl to start CPR. He performed CPR with the AED Plus prompting him on the quality of his compressions until the AED instructed him to stop. After a second round of analysis, the AED advised another shock, which was promptly delivered.

"I was fumbling as I turned on the AED and applied the pads," said Carl. "Once I got the pads on, the AED took over. I was petrified. It was a comfort that the AED Plus walked me through the rescue, because I don't think I would have remembered what to do. The AED kept saying to push harder on my compressions, and then it said, 'Good Compressions.' I was nervous, but I did what it told me to do. Even though Francis was still not responding, I continued doing CPR until the emergency response team was able to take over."



Shortly after the second shock, the emergency response team arrived. When Francis left the store by ambulance, she was still under extreme distress. Her heart was showing some signs of a rhythm, but she still did not have a pulse. By the time she got to the local emergency room, she was breathing and had a pulse.

Later that evening, Clay Hammes, Blain's director of safety and workers compensation, provided the AED data on Francis' rescue to an emergency room nurse. Francis' information from the AED followed her to Saint Francis Medical Center in Peoria, Illinois, where she underwent surgery for an implantable defibrillator.

*"Francis Mitchell is one of three women Blain's Farm & Fleet employees have helped save using ZOLL's AED Plus and CPR at their stores within four months."*

*Rescuer Carl Summers*

Before the surgery, Carl went to visit her. "I was glad Francis was doing well. It was a big relief. I was concerned she would not come out of it well. But she was back to her old self. She told me I hurt her chest!"

"If it hadn't been for Carl, I would not be here," said Francis. "The one thing I want to let Carl know is that he can quit worrying about me now. I'm doing fine, and as long as I have my internal defibrillator—my number one best friend—and it's working right, I am fine. Friends are a valuable asset, and it was great seeing everyone when I visited the store the other day. I am very fortunate."

### A Commitment to Heart Health

Blain Supply, Inc., of Janesville, Wisconsin, which provides management services to Blain's Farm & Fleet, has been a major supporter of the health and safety of its 3,900 employees and its customers for many years.

In 2003, Blain Supply established a formal AED and CPR program following the death of an associate in its corporate offices. At that time, Gary Hilt, vice president of loss prevention and risk management, made a proposal to the company's board of directors to provide AEDs in the corporate office. He gained approval to purchase four AEDs for the corporate office and a nearby distribution center and formed an emergency response team. Four years later, Clay Hammes and Gary Hilt made a second proposal to the board to install AED Plus units in all

of their retail locations. Today, all 35 retail locations throughout Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa, have AED Plus units on-site.

"We are all very happy that the company decided to make an investment in this life-saving equipment," said Gary. "Company owners and boards of directors make decisions about spending and saving money all the time, but it's rare that they get the opportunity to vote on something that can save someone's life. What made it easier for us was the fact that the board of directors and the owners made a commitment a long time ago to the safety of our associates and customers, and continue to maintain that commitment. Upper management needs to understand the need for an AED and CPR program. There also needs to be a good trainer in place so associates feel comfortable with the idea of using the equipment."

"An AED is an investment you hope you never use," added Clay. "It hangs on a wall, and it's easy to question the expense until you have a situation like this. That's when its true value reveals itself."

In Francis' situation, the AED was priceless.

(Front, far right) Gary Hilt, vice president of Blain Supply, Inc., in Janesville, Wis., presents the American Heart Association's "Heartsaver Hero Awards" to the Farm & Fleet store manager and four sales associates for their swift actions in rescuing co-worker Francis Mitchell in the Ottawa store. (Left to right) Courtney Clements, Janet Smith, Melissa Fenoglio, Sharon Boswell, Survivor Francis Mitchell, Manager Carl Summers, and Hilt.



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