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Swanson staffers give diner who had heart attack CPR

BY STEPHEN LARGEN • SLARGEN@MONROE.GANNETT.COM • MARCH 3, 2010

Swanson Center for Youth staff helped save a man's life at a Vidalia restaurant Tuesday afternoon while they were in town for a meeting with Office of Juvenile Justice staff.

Swanson Deputy Director Vernon Foy said the man collapsed in the restaurant and lost consciousness.

Swanson staffers, who were sitting across the restaurant, came to the man's aide and found he didn't have a pulse.

Several staffers performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) for about 10 minutes and were able to restore the man's breathing before an ambulance showed up and rushed the man to a local hospital for treatment, Foy said.

The man is recovering at a Natchez, Miss. hospital.

"All of us just traded off doing CPR as each person got tired," Foy said.

"The staff just stepped in and did what they were supposed to do — the Good Samaritan thing."

All employees who work in the Office of Juvenile Justice facilities receive emergency training each year, said Fran Martin, director of staff development for the office.

"It was really heartwarming to see it pay off," she said.

Jerel M. Giarrusso, Office of Juvenile Justice communications director, said the office was told the 80-year-old man had a heart attack.

She said staffers, who stopped by the hospital later, learned from the man's family that he was aware and talking.

She said they never asked the man's name.

Along with Martin and Foy, the other staffers who administered CPR were John Preston, Swanson La Mod coordinator; Rodney Alex, Swanson safety captain; William Lee, Swanson principal and John Brunn, Swanson maintenance manager.