

DISPATCHES

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“I remember seeing the car. I remember the force of the crash and then a tingling feeling.”

Elizabeth Searles

VISITING YOUTH’S ADVOCACY FOR SEATBELT USE GROWS AFTER ACCIDENT

By Randall Dustin, CMMC Communications Director

Elizabeth Searles of Staten Island, N.Y., has a thing about wearing seatbelts — and her habit of always buckling up may have saved her life.

On July 2 the 14-year-old was visiting her grandparents and aunt in

Windsor. Late in the afternoon they decided to go strawberry picking and she piled into the back seat of the car. Her grandfather was sitting next to her and she noticed he wasn’t wearing his seatbelt. As she snapped the three-point restraint into place, she admonished him that he should do the same. He complied.

The foursome was headed north on Alder Park Road in nearby China when Elizabeth says she remembers rising over a crest in the highway and seeing an oncoming vehicle. Her grandmother pulled the car onto the shoulder of the road.

“I remember seeing the car. I remember the force of the crash and then a tingling feeling,” Elizabeth says.

The head-on collision left the occupants of both cars injured and the vehicles demolished. A passerby called 911 and rescuers from Delta Ambulance’s Waterville station were dispatched to the scene. They arrived to find Elizabeth trapped in the car and began extricating her with Jaws of Life. Sometime during the extrication process, Delta Ambulance called for LifeFlight of Maine and MedComm dispatched the Lewiston crew. Because weather reports were showing a severe thunderstorm



Fourteen-year-old Elizabeth Searles of Staten Island, N.Y., seated, was flown to Central Maine Medical Center after a head-on car crash. Her insistence on using seatbelts was credited with preventing more tragic consequences. Her parents, Sal and Diane Lestrade, from left, standing, were by her side during her stay at CMMC. Registered nurse and paramedic Lori Metayer, site coordinator for LifeFlight’s Lewiston base, standing, far right, was part of the crew that transported Elizabeth following the accident. See accompanying story for details.

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MISSION STATEMENT

LifeFlight of Maine provides a statewide medical helicopter service that transports critically ill and injured patients. LifeFlight provides the highest quality of care and follows rigorous safety standards.

LIFEFLIGHT OF MAINE

LifeFlight of Maine is a non-profit statewide critical care medical helicopter service jointly operated by Eastern Maine Healthcare and Central Maine Healthcare. LifeFlight's two helicopters, based in Bangor and Lewiston, cover the entire state and the offshore islands. LifeFlight compliments and supports the work of local physicians, physician assistants, nurses and EMS squads in caring for the caring for the critically ill and injured. Each base is staffed by a team of 20 highly qualified flight nurses and paramedics, two of whom fly on every flight.

LifeFlight is fully accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems.

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TURNING OFF THE FAUCET INJURY PREVENTION PROGRAM

By Karen L. Sites, Administrative Assistant, LifeFlight of Maine Outreach

For the second year, sixth graders at Orono Middle School have taken part in Turning Off the Faucet, LifeFlight of Maine's injury prevention program.

"If you keep the water running in the sink, eventually it will overflow and you will have to continuously mop up the mess. But if you 'turn off the faucet' and prevent water from creating a mess in the first place, the problem is solved," LifeFlight Executive Director Tom Judge told the kids as he explained how to think about safety and injury prevention.

In the course of the program, other professionals presented the kids with information on numerous topics, including head injury and helmet safety, use of seatbelts and risk assessment. Nine seventh graders were chosen to mentor sixth graders and share with them what they had learned the year before. Along with teachers Valerie Shinas and Debra Soderberg, the students worked on their projects in conjunction with their language arts, and math lessons during the second half of the year.

The kids started off by choosing topics they would be interested in researching. From this list they created survey questions to ask the public. Then they polled different population groups in their neighborhoods, such as: University of Maine students, Orono residents, everyone at the middle school, teachers, parents, and grandparents. With the data they collected they made fact sheets,

brochures, hyperstudio presentations and a public service announcement. In their math class they surveyed people online and created spreadsheets that translated the data into a pie chart that changed as people filled out the questionnaire. Some of the sixth graders also came up with creative games, such as matching games, that tested people's knowledge while also letting them have fun.



These 6th Graders at Orono Middle School took part in Turning Off the Faucet, LifeFlight of Maine's injury prevention program. This dedicated group of kids won first prize for the Awesome Body Classroom Project at the Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems Wellness Fair at the Bangor Mall.

At the end of the school year the kids brought their projects to the Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems Wellness Fair at the Bangor Mall. The students also held an open house at the Orono Middle School for parents. Topics ranged from a demonstration on what happens to your brain when you are injured and wearing or not wearing a bicycle helmet, to the risks of drinking and driving. Their projects included very impressive PowerPoint presentations, charts, and videotaped public service announcements. The kids showed that they knew their stuff as they very confidently explained their projects to shoppers, parents, and others. While there were several other schools also presenting wonderful projects at the EMHS Wellness Fair, the judges awarded the dedicated sixth graders from Orono first prize for the Awesome Body Classroom Project!

Profiles

John Scanlon grew up in Winchester, Mass., and earned a bachelor's degree in geology from Boston University. He had not given much thought to flying as a career until he took a helicopter flight through the White Mountains. It was then he decided to become a pilot.



John Scanlon

John enjoyed living and working in Portsmouth, N.H., for 11 years, where his flying jobs involving traffic reporting, instructing, sight-seeing and being a charter and photography pilot took him towards Boston. But he much preferred to settle in the other direction. EMS flying appealed to him because it wasn't routine and the work could make such a difference in people's lives.

Because LifeFlight requires flight experience that he hadn't gotten in his previous work as a pilot, John spent some 18 months flying EMS for a small operator in Syracuse, N.Y. In 2000 LifeFlight had an opening and he was ready to move.

Since moving to Maine, John plans his non-work time around his family and his interest in hiking, backcountry skiing and kayaking. One of the benefits of flying in Maine, he says, is being able to scout places that he otherwise wouldn't see.

John lives in Woolwich with his

... *Elizabeth Searles continued*

between Augusta and Waterville, Delta and LifeFlight agreed to meet at the Augusta Airport.

Elizabeth says when she was cut free, she "slid out of the car." The EMTs put her on a stretcher and applied a neck brace. "My stomach hurt so much. They knew what was wrong with me," Elizabeth says with amazement. "They said I had 'hot belly.' "

Lori Metayer, site coordinator for LifeFlight's Lewiston base, is a registered nurse and paramedic. She was part of the crew that responded to the

longtime companion, Sarah, and their son, Liam, who just turned a year old.

Kim McGraw, R.N., C.C.E.M.T.-P., FP-C, a registered nurse and paramedic, is an original member of LifeFlight of Maine's Lewiston flight crew.

She joined LifeFlight as a paramedic when the program was founded in 1998, and she's continued to sharpen her skills by completing advanced training and certification programs. In 2002 she was awarded an associate degree in nursing from the Central Maine Medical Center School of Nursing. In addition to her certification as a critical care paramedic, in 2003 she became a certified flight paramedic.

Kim has more than 20 years experience in emergency medical services, including 14 years as a paramedic. She has worked for several EMS services in Maine, and also has experience as an intensive care and emergency department nurse.

Lori Metayer, R.N., E.M.T.-P., program coordinator-base manager of LifeFlight of Maine's Lewiston base, is a registered nurse and paramedic.

A 1984 graduate of the Central Maine Medical Center School of Nursing, she later earned a bachelor's

call. In EMS parlance, "hot belly" means suspected internal injuries and bleeding, she explains. "The first thing Elizabeth said to me was, 'I'm not talking with you. I just want you to put me to sleep so I can have my operation,'" Lori recalls.

The Trauma Team at CMMC evaluated Elizabeth and discovered that the emergency responders' assessment of her condition was generally accurate: Elizabeth had a ruptured bowel, torn artery, and shredded abdominal muscles. She was readied for surgery.



Lori Metayer

degree in nursing from the University of Southern Maine in Portland and subsequently gained paramedic certification.

Her nursing career began on the CMMC Intensive Care Unit (ICU). She was later named manager of the Orthopedic-Neurosurgery Nursing Unit and then worked for three years as a nursing supervisor, but her interest in critical care nursing drew her back to the ICU and Emergency Department.

In 1998 Metayer was named CMMC's Emergency Nurse of the Year. When LifeFlight of Maine began operations that same year, she joined the new service as a flight nurse.

Metayer is a member of the national outreach committee for the Association of Air Medical Services and has presented clinical and safety educational programs throughout Maine and nationally.

She lives in Lisbon Falls with her husband, Shawn, also a LifeFlight paramedic, and their children, Bryan, Kayla, Lauren and Katrina. She spends her off time following her kids' sports activities, and pursuing her other interests, which include skiing and riding her Harley-Davidson.

Diane Lestrade, Elizabeth's mother, said she was surprised by her own reaction when CMMC trauma surgeon Karen Crowell, M.D., introduced herself over the telephone, "I don't panic about much . . ." Mrs. Lestrade says, pausing for a moment before adding, ". . . that got shot to hell. Dr. Crowell said she was a trauma surgeon — at that point I just lost it." "

Dr. Crowell explained Elizabeth's injuries and told the stunned Mrs. Lestrade that her daughter was heading for surgery. When Mrs. Lestrade later

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LIFELIGHT AND CMMC HOST EMS APPRECIATION DAY

by Cathy Case, R.N., CCRN, EMT-P, Lewiston Crew

In celebration of National EMS Week, LifeFlight of Maine and Central Maine Medical Center recently held an appreciation day for Maine's Prehospital Emergency Medical Providers. All EMS care providers were invited to attend.

Attendees received a free gift, plenty of food, and the opportunity to earn continuing education credits by participating in interactive educational sta-

tions, including such topics as 12-lead EKG interpretation, airway and IV therapy, construction of a litter in the wilderness, evidence preservation, creative splinting, and several different Jeopardy games.

There were also several door prize drawings. Scott French of United Ambulance won the most popular gift, a digital camera and printer donated by the CMMC Emergency Department

physicians.

Other prize winners included:

CES Ambulance Service – a hand-held GPS system donated by Kevin Kendall, M.D.

Minot Rescue – a hand-held GPS system donated by Kevin Kendall, M.D.

Blaine Rackliff – a scholarship to the Samoset EMS conference donated by MidCoast EMS

Rod Koehn – a scholarship to The Advanced Airway Lab donated by Dr. Peter Goth

Kelly McMahan – a helicopter ride with LifeFlight

Rob Melotto – a scholarship to a Wilderness EMT Course donated by David Johnson, M.D.

Other donations to the day were made by DeLorme Maps of Yarmouth, The Maineiacs hockey team of Lewiston, Tri-County EMS, and CMMC's Trauma Service physicians.



LOM paramedic Pete Tilney shows Mae Audibert how to construct a stretcher using equipment often available to those hiking or camping in the wilderness.

... Elizabeth Searles continued

spoke with her mother, who was driving at the time of the crash, she said her anxiety grew by volumes. "The last thing my mother heard Elizabeth say was, 'I can't breathe; I'm dying,'" she recalls.

Mrs. Lestrad and her husband, Sal, checked with the airlines and decided it would be quicker to drive from New York City to Lewiston. They threw some things together and hit the road, arriving at CMMC at about 3 a.m. the next day.

Mr. and Mrs. Lestrad found their daughter in good hands at CMMC. The surgery had gone well and Elizabeth was recovering in the Intensive Care Unit. Dr. Crowell told them that the repairs she made to the girl's abdomen and bowel were extensive, but that she

should have a good recovery.

Over the next several days, the Lestrads found much to like about CMMC and the LifeFlight crew who visited with them regularly. "We've been in hospitals in New York and they're nothing like this," Mr. Lestrad says. "The ICU people and people on this floor [the Pediatrics Unit] were amazing," Mrs. Lestrad adds. Someone in CMMC's Pathology Department put an especially nice touch on things when they sent Elizabeth flowers.

After seeing her daughter and visiting the other family members who were in the crash, Mrs. Lestrad says she's convinced that seatbelts prevented what would have otherwise been a tragedy. "All four had a stripe from the seatbelt," she says, drawing a finger

diagonally across her own chest. "It was like a badge of honor for wearing a seatbelt." Elizabeth agrees with her mother's assessment, and rather blunt in her estimation of the importance of wearing seatbelts. "Seatbelts should always be worn. They should never, never not be worn," she says. "If you think you don't need a seatbelt, you're stupid."

Mrs. Lestrad says that July 2 seemed to be a day when things were destined to go wrong, and the seatbelts probably prevented things from going very, very wrong. About the same time that her daughter, mother, father and aunt were in the accident, lightning struck a tree in her parents' yard. "Isn't that eerie?" she asks.

DOWN EAST RECOGNIZES HELIPAD SUPPORTER

by Karen L. Sites, Administrative Assistant, LifeFlight of Maine Outreach

For the past 40 years Bud Johnson has been a fixture at Down East Community Hospital (DECH). He was there when the hospital opened its doors back in 1964 – and he generously offered to plow the yard for free. Through the years Bud has helped the fund-raising committee bring in much-needed funds, he serves as committee member of the Board Plant Utilization Committee, and he has been a hospital corporator for 25 years. Additionally, Bud has donated the use of his fair-grounds for various hospital events such as the Auxiliary County Fair, parking for Blood Drives, a rodeo, and a number of walk-a-thons.

So when LifeFlight of Maine was founded in 1999 and Down East Community Hospital needed a landing zone for the helicopter, Bud once again stepped up to the plate, allowing LifeFlight to land in a field he owns near DECH. During the past five years LifeFlight has air transported approxi-



From left, Jon Wardwell, Carol Jordan, Bud Johnson, and Matt Deloia. Bud recently received an award from Down East Community Hospital recognizing his many years of generosity.

mately 22 patients per year from DECH, thanks to Bud Johnson's generosity.

With the help of a grant from the Maine Health Access Foundation, DECH has now opened their own on-site helipad, with the first LifeFlight occurring in March of this year.

Although Bud's field will no longer be needed for LifeFlight landings, LifeFlight and DECH will always appreciate his willingness to help and his can-do attitude. It's philanthropic efforts like Bud's that make Maine such a special place to live.

MAINE HEALTH ACCESS FOUNDATION AWARDS LIFEFLIGHT \$200,000 FOR PATIENT SIMULATOR TRAINING PROJECT

by Karen L. Sites, Administrative Assistant, LifeFlight of Maine Outreach

The Maine Health Access Foundation (MeHAF) has awarded LifeFlight \$200,000 to help establish a vastly improved trauma and critical care educational outreach program.

The program will have as its core a mobile human patient simulator, a state-of-the-art computerized mannequin. Housed in a recreational-type vehicle, it will travel throughout the state providing hands-on training to the emergency staffs of community hospitals and local EMS providers. Such training affords scenario-based education, repeated practice and team training, with the goal of improved assessment, treatment, and stabilization for flight of critically ill and injured patients.

Staffed by LifeFlight medical crews, the mobile simulator will be on the road 200 days a year. The MeHAF grant will provide for the initial training of the simulator operators, program design, and assessment phases.

Camden National Bank makes \$10,000 grant to LifeFlight of Maine

With strong endorsement from its board of directors, Camden National Bank has made a \$10,000 unrestricted grant to LifeFlight of Maine.

In presenting the gift to Executive Director Tom Judge and Development Director Pen Williamson, Camden National Bank President Greg Dufor

hailed LifeFlight's vital role in providing critical care access throughout the state, and expressed his hope other businesses would also offer their financial support to LifeFlight.

New Trustee Elected

Michael R. Gray of Pittsfield has been elected a member of the LifeFlight of Maine Foundation Board of Trustees.

Mike is President of Lehr Insurance Agency in Pittsfield, chairman of the board of Sebecook Valley Hospital, and a member of the board of Eastern Maine Healthcare. He is a retired Army colonel and pilot, who once flew medical helicopters.



LIFEFLIGHT OF MAINE

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Dispatches is published by LifeFlight of Maine for friends, supporters, and members of the state's Emergency Medical Services community. Comments and suggestions may be directed to the Central Maine Medical Center Communications Department.
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EMS PROFILE – GARDINER FIRE DEPARTMENT

The 12-person fire and EMS crew in Gardiner has its work cut out for them. The crew is responsible for covering most of the calls in its 253-square-mile district which includes Gardiner, West Gardiner, Farmingdale, Randolph, Pittson, Litchfield, Dresden and Richmond.

This enthusiastic group responds to five to eight calls per day or approximately 2000 calls per year. When responding to a serious accident “we have no problem calling LifeFlight,” Jeff Blake, a paramedic for Gardiner Fire comments. “Most of the time if we call from the base they arrive at the same time we do,” Marcel DeForge, an intermediate adds. The main reason they usually request LifeFlight to a call is when an advanced airway is needed.

Gardiner Fire is the only department in its area with a ladder truck, boat and extrication equipment. For this reason the crew receives most of the specialty calls. When the four men on duty respond to a call they serve as both fire fighters and the EMS providers.

Upon arrival at a fire they are first firemen. Once any victims have been removed from the building they may take off their fire hats – so to speak – and become EMS providers. The Gardiner crew members work 24 hour shifts with 48 hours off. Many of these ambitious men spend their time off

working for other agencies. DeForge, for example, works for two other agencies.

During their down time at the station the close-knit group enjoys cooking and eating together. They take their cooking very seriously and can make a mean cheese burger.



Marcel DeForge, left, and Jeff Blake are paramedics for Gardiner Fire. Together with their colleagues they work hard to keep the people in their 253-square-mile coverage area safe.