

Star-Telegram

Fort Worth high school student is thankful to those who saved his life

Posted Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2009

BY EVA-MARIE AYALA
eayala@star-telegram.com

FORT WORTH — Luis Rubio was all but dead.

The 15-year-old's heart suddenly stopped and his eyes rolled back as he collapsed during his first lap around the track at Trimble Tech High School last month.

Immediately, coaches Mike Garza and Tyson Wormsbaker performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Then athletic trainer Jason Braud used an automated external defibrillator that soon got Rubio's heart going again.

"Everything clicked like it was supposed to," Braud said. "Without the AED, Luis would not be in the state he is now — healthy and alive."

It was about six minutes from Rubio's collapse to his departure in an ambulance after he was revived.

Dr. Jeff Beeson, associate medical director for MedStar EMS in Fort Worth, said timing was everything in helping Rubio. A person can become brain-dead in four to six minutes, and the chances of survival decrease by 10 percent for every minute that goes by before emergency aid is administered, Beeson said.

He also noted that performing CPR and using a defibrillator more than double the chances of surviving cardiac arrest.

At Tuesday night's school board meeting, MedStar honored Garza, Wormsbaker and Braud with a Community Hero Award.

Garza said that much of the incident was a blur and that the men were emotional with relief.

"It was the scariest thing that's happened to me," said Garza, who coaches baseball and football at Tech. "I hope this will never happen again."

Rubio said he was grateful to the men who saved his life.

On Sept. 10, the sophomore had just started the day's conditioning practice for baseball. He suddenly felt tired and an urgent need to rest his arms.

"Then I blacked out," he said. "When I woke, my coaches were over me and the paramedics were arriving."

Rubio was born with transposition of the great arteries, in which the two main arteries leaving the heart are reversed. He had surgery when he was 2 days old to correct the defect, his family said. He has had checkups every six months and a heart catheterization when he was 7 to check blood flow and how well his heart was working.

His family said that doctors could not definitively link his birth condition to his cardiac arrest last month but that he did have blockage of an artery. Rubio had open-heart surgery after his collapse and has been resting at home since. He plans to return to class next month, but it is unclear whether he can ever again play outfield in a sport he has loved since age 4.

"The doctors aren't sure if they're going to let me, but if not, the coaches said I can be an assistant so I can still be part of the team," Rubio said. "But if I can play, that would be great."

EVA-MARIE AYALA, 817-390-7700