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NEWS RELEASE

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Covina-Valley Unified Medical Pathway Teacher, Student Provide Life-Saving Care in Medical Emergency

COVINA, CA – Every second counts when it comes to providing CPR. It is a mantra within the healthcare industry and a lesson South Hills High School Medical Pathway Teacher Nikki Rodriguez-Ahern instills in her students.

On April 26, Rodriguez-Ahern and South Hills High senior Karissa Ramos were called upon to put that lesson into practice when they encountered a medical emergency in the community and jumped into action to provide medical expertise and life-saving care. Just four days before the medical intervention, Rodriguez-Ahern had led her C-VUSD Medical Pathway students, including Ramos, through a CPR certification course.

“I had just become CPR certified that Saturday, and on Wednesday, I was doing it for real,” Ramos said. “It is crazy to think about it all. It is an experience and a memory that will stick with me forever. This is a story I can share and be proud of as I work towards my career in the medical field.”

Rodriguez-Ahern was dropping Ramos off at her Medical Pathway’s clinical placement – just a few steps from Rodriguez-Ahern’s home – when they saw an unconscious man lying in the street. The two responded immediately and checked his pulse while a bystander called 911. While waiting for fire and rescue, Rodriguez-Ahern administered CPR for approximately seven minutes while Ramos assisted.

“We worked in tandem; we were a team, and that is what you are supposed to do in CPR,” Rodriguez-Ahern said of Ramos. “I knew I did not have to worry about her because she reacted quickly. She was like my right hand; she stepped in immediately on the scene and did whatever was needed.”

Three days later, Rodriguez-Ahern was relieved that the man had completely recovered.

“He told me he was alive today because of our actions,” Rodriguez-Ahern said. “He was very grateful; the smile on his face was ear-to-ear.”

Covina-Valley Unified School District’s Board of Education honored Rodriguez-Ahern at the May 8 Board meeting for her heroic actions.

MORE

Covina-Valley Unified's medical pathways are part of 26 robust career technical education (CTE) options. All three District comprehensive high schools offer medical pathways, with specialties in nursing, athletic training/sports physical therapy, patient care, and medical assisting.

At Covina-Valley Unified, CTE students receive real-world training and practical experiences that prepare them for postsecondary education or to jumpstart their careers after high school. Students in the Medical Pathway earn a certificate of completion, along with the American Heart Association CPR certification through the program, and will be able to complete certifications in blood-borne pathogens and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance in 2023-24.

"Nikki Rodriguez-Ahern's and Karissa Ramos' quick thinking and courageous actions inspire us all," Superintendent Dr. Elizabeth Eminhizer said. "This is an incredible example of our staff's dedication, compassion, and commitment to our community. Our students are fortunate to be able to learn valuable, real-life skills from highly trained professionals like Ms. Rodriguez-Ahern."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

CVUSD_MEDICAL1: South Hills High School Medical Pathway Teacher Nikki Rodriguez-Ahern, left, and senior Karissa Ramos provided life-saving care to a man who lost consciousness on April 26.

CVUSD_MEDICAL2: Covina-Valley Unified Medical Pathway Teacher Nikki Rodriguez-Ahern was honored at the C-VUSD Board of Education meeting on May 8 for her heroic actions in providing CPR to a man who lost consciousness in her neighborhood.

CVUSD_MEDICAL3: South Hills High School Medical Pathway Teacher Nikki Rodriguez-Ahern, right, and Karissa Ramos provided CPR to a man who lost consciousness. The medical emergency intervention occurred just four days after Rodriguez-Ahern led her students, including Ramos, through a CPR certification course.

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