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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### ***Rio Hondo College EMT Student Puts Training into Action, Saves Choking Woman***

**WHITTIER** – A Rio Hondo College emergency medical technician student put his classroom training into practice this month when he stepped in to help a choking woman at an area BJ’s Restaurant and Brewhouse.

Mark King Jr., 23, of Lynwood, was celebrating a friend’s birthday at the restaurant in Downey on Sept. 16 when some of the guests told him a woman at the party was in distress, possibly having trouble breathing.

“They know I’m in school for EMT, that I’m CPR-certified and I know what to do,” King said. “I rushed over and asked the woman if she was choking or if she just couldn’t breathe. She pointed at her throat and gave the universal sign that she was choking. She was gasping for air.”

King sprang into action.

“I got into position to give the Heimlich maneuver, the procedure you do to help someone who is choking. I gave three to five abdominal thrusts, and the food that was lodged in her airway came out,” he said.

The student’s poise and presence of mind were praised by Rio Hondo College leaders.

“Mark embodies the essence of the community service mindset we try to foster at Rio Hondo College,” Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said. “I’m proud that our training played a pivotal role in helping him save this woman. He is a true hero.”

King who works at Disneyland, said he had been considering the EMT program for a while.

“I like helping people and I thought this would be a good field to go into. I have a couple of friends in the field and I have an older cousin who is an LVN,” King said.

## MORE

*Rio Hondo College, located in Whittier, California, is committed to the success of its diverse students and communities by providing dynamic educational opportunities and resources that lead to degrees, certificates, transfer, career and technical pathways, basic skills proficiency, and lifelong learning. For information on the College or its programs, please call 562-692-0921 or visit [www.riohondo.edu](http://www.riohondo.edu).*

To join the EMT program, King first needed to take a basic fire tech course over the summer. Then, in August, he began the eight-week program, which meets from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. four days a week. He picked Rio Hondo College because the program has a sterling reputation while remaining affordable.

King said his experience at the restaurant solidified his drive to become an EMT.

“It reassured me that I’m able to act under pressure, to execute the procedures in a safe and effective manner, to help someone,” he said. “It also made me feel great.”

Board of Trustees President Mary Ann Pacheco said Rio Hondo College’s EMT program is one of several well-regarded public service programs offered by the College.

“Rio Hondo College is also known for our stellar police academy, fire academy and nursing programs, all of which are considered among the state’s best,” Pacheco said.

**PHOTO:**

**092916\_RHC\_EMT1:** Rio Hondo College EMT student Mark King Jr., 23, sprang into action to save a choking woman at a BJ’s Restaurant and Brewhouse on Sept. 16, drawing on training received during the intense eight-week program.

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