

**NEWS**

# 15 St. Paul police officers honored for saving lives

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When 10-month-old Nayomi Nelson stopped breathing after she suffered apparent seizures last year, her mother, Amy Nelson, panicked. Someone called 911.

The first to arrive were St. Paul police officers Susan Hartnett and Christopher Hoyt, who opened the child's airway and provided care until medics arrived.

They saved her daughter's life, Amy Nelson said.

The pair were among 15 St. Paul police officers recognized Wednesday for their roles in six lifesaving events in the past year.

Hartnett and Nayomi Nelson, who will turn 2 next month, saw each other again Wednesday for the first time since last year. Hartnett, a mom herself, got a chance to hold the toddler.



Hartnett and Hoyt found Nayomi Nelson on July 18, 2010, pale and sweating, Hartnett said. When Nayomi was handed to them, “we just did what seemed natural.” Hartnett said she doesn’t consider herself a hero.

Hoyt was unable to attend the ceremony.

Whenever there’s a call involving a baby, it touches the hearts of officers, said St. Paul Police Chief Thomas Smith, who announced the awards at the department’s Western District office on Hamline Avenue. “It leads us down to a path that’s unbelievable,” he said.

The quick response and teamwork of Hartnett and Hoyt, who are patrol partners, saved the baby’s life, Smith said.

Mayor Chris Coleman, who handed out the awards, said there’s no greater gift than saving a life.

The following officers also received awards:

– Responding to a suicide in progress last August, officers Nicholas Schafer and Philip Mohs grabbed a man who had lunged out the window of his 16th-floor apartment. They brought him inside and handcuffed him. He again tried to jump out the window, but they stopped him.

– When officers Francisco Ortiz, Todd Tessmer, Joseph Bilek and Brian Casey responded to a welfare-check call Jan. 24, they found a distraught man on the Edgerton Street Bridge over Phalen Boulevard. He had climbed over a railing and was pacing back and forth on a snowy ledge. They officers spent 90 minutes talking to the man until they persuaded him to climb back over the railing to safety.

– Officers Seth Snedden, Joshua Lynaugh and Christopher McGuire responded on Feb. 23 to a suicide-in-progress call. They made their way into the residence, where a man tried to stop them and became combative. In the home, they found a locked bathroom door. After hearing a crash in the bathroom, they forced open the door and found a man hanging from a sheet that had been tied around pipes. He was turning blue. Police hoisted the victim and cut the sheet from the pipes.

– Officer Krystel Karels found a man without a pulse when she responded to a Feb. 24 call about a possible overdose. After she called for medics, she began chest compressions. After about a minute, the man began to move and breathe.



– When officers Shawn Longen and Len Wall responded April 3 to a suicide in progress on the Wabasha Street Bridge, they found officer Adam Bravo holding onto a woman’s waist and two citizens holding her arms, as she dangled above the Mississippi River. The officers grabbed the woman as she continued to struggle. The officers and citizens held onto her until medics arrived, and she could be pulled to safety.

The two citizens in that incident will soon receive the Chief’s Award for Merit, Smith said.

In his closing remarks, Smith quoted writer Ambrose Redmoon: “Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear.”

Smith worries more about officers who have no fear than those who do, he said. The events highlighted Wednesday, he said, are a snapshot of the work police do every day.

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