

Aids choking victim

Alert postal employee saves day

By Jackie Klein
Staff writer

It's been said that heroes aren't ever there when the rest of us, just brave five minutes longer.

To this, Dean Christopher of Southfield adds that heroes are braver guides. And he believes he's alive today because of that kind of swift action by Southfield letter carrier Richard Felstow.

Felstow, according to Christopher, is a hero in the most real sense. He credited him with saving his life last month by dislodging a blockage from his

throat. The incident occurred while Felstow was delivering mail to the apartment complex where Christopher lives.

Felstow, a 33-year resident of Southfield and a letter carrier for 18 years, recently received a letter of commendation from Southfield Postmaster Norman E. Lovell and a Special Achievement Award on April 19 from the U.S. Postal Service "in recognition of notable performance."

"MY HUSBAND didn't tell anyone at the post office about the incident when he returned from his route," said Doro-

thy Felstow. "If Christopher hadn't written to the postmaster about Dick's heroic act, it would have gone unnoticed."

But Christopher said he wanted the postmaster to know that one of his carriers is a true hero.

Christopher was ill at home one day last month and had just swallowed two Tylenol tablets. Since his larynx was inflamed, Christopher said, the tablets lodged in his throat, blocking his airway.

"Despite my hurried attempt to get the pills down by swallowing more water, they remained jammed in place," Christopher wrote. "In desperation, running out of air, I dashed out into the hallway where Dick Felstow was just entering to deliver mail."

"I ran down the stairs and said 'I'm choking.'"

"Without a second's hesitation, Felstow dropped his mail sack, span me around and performed the Heimlich

maneuver, dislodging the pills. Except for this swift action, I probably would have choked to death."

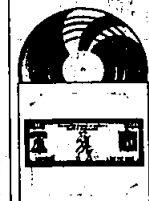
Felstow is to be commended for his instantaneous action, his willingness to help someone in distress and his modesty, Christopher said.

"Without stopping to consider if it's wise to get involved, Dick got involved and I'm around to tell about it. I'm glad he was around."

FELSTOW WAS aware of the Heimlich maneuver because he saw the procedure performed on television and by a waitress on a friend of his who was choking on food in a restaurant.

"The procedure is similar to a bear hug," said Mrs. Felstow. "You get behind the person who's choking, put your fist in his or her stomach and pull hard. The blockage dislodges. Dick wasn't sure how to do it properly. But, thankfully, it worked."

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For registration information call Rona Moscow at 577-4682 (credit) or Mary Kay Reed at 577-4686 (non-credit).

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