



NEWS RELEASE

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(Off-Duty Hillsboro Firefighter Saves Diner)

An off-duty Hillsboro firefighter is being credited with saving the life of a Salem restaurant patron last Wednesday (August 18, 2009). The incident occurred at the Olive Garden, 1302 Lancaster Drive NE. Restaurant employees say an elderly gentleman who was confined to a wheelchair began choking on a piece of chicken. One member of the wait staff attempted to perform the Heimlich maneuver but was unsuccessful due to the patient's position on the wheelchair. Another wait person began asking other patrons in the restaurant if they were a doctor or emergency medical technician.

Off duty Hillsboro Firefighter Luis Mota was dining in the next room with friends when he heard the request for help. He ran to the side of the patient, pulled the man to the floor and began administering the Heimlich maneuver again. The patient was still not exchanging air and had lost consciousness. Firefighter Mota then switched to chest compressions in accordance with his training, at which time the chicken became dislodged from the patient's airway. Salem Fire Department paramedics had been summoned and transported the patient to a Salem hospital where they indicated he arrived there conscious and breathing. Federal privacy laws prohibit releasing the name of the patient.

"I am completely impressed and relieved that he stepped up and helped out," said Olive Garden's Hospitality Manager Rob Gardner about Firefighter Mota's actions. "I am not certain what we would have done without his help." Gardner indicated he had not had a similar experience in his 12 years in the food service industry.

"I am not surprised, but I am very proud," said Hillsboro Fire Chief Gary Seidel. "Our firefighters are compassionate people and Firefighter Mota's actions point out the fact that emergency responders are never off-duty when it comes to saving a life." The 25-year old Mota has been with Hillsboro Fire Department since March 3, 2008.

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