American Airlines Newsroom

NEWS RELEASE

How quick actions saved a life

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American Airlines Flight 89 arrived at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) as usual one normal afternoon this spring. But shortly thereafter, Todd Martin, a Fleet Service Clerk, lost consciousness while unloading cargo out of the rear compartment of the aircraft. Another Fleet Service Clerk, Cheikh Diop, recognized his coworker was in distress, and immediately called 911 and started chest compressions. Later, Cheikh would describe the day as one he'll never forget.

Luckily, he wasn't alone. Within seconds, Jeff Wasinger, another Fleet Service Clerk, started CPR, while Customer Service Manager Tony Redelfs began using the defibrillator. Customer Ops Manager Marla Muncy helped stabilize and secure their teammate to keep him from falling off the belt-loader while the team continued CPR. A mere five minutes after Todd collapsed from what they'd later find out to be a life-threatening heart attack, the first paramedic arrived on-site, taking over CPR efforts. Once the emergency medical technicians considered him stable enough for transport, the emergency vehicle quickly took him to a local hospital.

Sometimes caring for people on life's journey means recognizing when someone is in not themselves and jumping in to help. Thanks to the quick actions and care of his fellow teammates, Todd recovered and spent the following Easter weekend at home with his family.

"It's hard to put into words how I felt that day," said Tony. "It was emotional and terrifying. Knowing that Todd is healthy and back at work is the silver lining to the experience."

For their lifesaving intervention, Cheikh, Jeff, Tony and Marla were recognized with Real American Hero awards. Dale Salisbury, Managing Director of Customer Operations at DFW, presented them each with the infamous cape, $1,000 and cupcakes to celebrate the life they helped save.

“Receiving a Real American Hero award is truly an honor,” said Marla. “I’m lucky to be part of such a great team. Without the quick thinking and teamwork that came into play during those crucial moments, things may have not turned out so well. That day — and the days following — were tough for us, but we’d all do it again in a heartbeat.”

“More than anything, I’m thankful for this amazing group of people and everything they did that day to save my life,” said Todd. “I’ll never forget what they did for me — and neither will my family.”

From left, Tony Redelfs, Todd Martin and Cheikh Diop. Tony and Cheikh jumped into action when they noticed Todd in distress on the job.

Marla Muncy (left) and Jeff Wasinger (right) are also credited with saving Todd (center).