**2017 Star of Life**

**Region IV**

It’s a warm afternoon July 16, ’16 and Josh Slaughter has taken time to do

some work on the outside of his home, when he hears his wife, Kimberly,

screaming in the backyard. He breaks into a mad dash and as he rounds the

corner of the house he sees it. “Oh, Lord, no . . . please, no!”

At 12:45 PM Dispatcher Tammy Gilbert at Fentress County 911 takes the call

from a frantic mother on Panther Branch Road. She dispatches Fentress

County Unit 851 with Critical Care Paramedic Jonathan Beatty and

Paramedic Brian Norris with Johnny Dishman driving for an unresponsive,

respiratory distress. As they run to board the ambulance, Johnny, “Oh, crap!

That’s Slaughter’s house.” Tammy knows that 911 Supervisor Richard Cross

needs to be notified of this transport. Four minutes later they round the

corner onto Panther Branch Road.

As Josh Slaughter sprints across his backyard and sees his 2½ year old son,

Michael, floating face down in the swimming pool inside he says, “God, please!

Don’t let this be, don’t let this be!” He jumps into the pool, thrashes his way to

his son, flips his lifeless tiny body over and drags him to the pool’s edge.

Breathlessly, he tells Kim to call 911. Neither of them knows how long

Michael has been down . . . but Josh is a Critical Care Paramedic and

instinctively, he knows what to do.

He lays Michael’s body on the ground thinking, “I can do this. I can do this. No

need to feel for a pulse he is lifeless. Start chest compressions! What it is for a

kid?! One rescuer . . . 30 compressions then 2 breaths . . . yeah, yeah, yeah!

Gotta perfuse the coronaries first though.” After years of practice, Josh is

doing the compressions by muscle memory already. As he seals his mouth

over Michael’s for the first breath, he feels how cold his son’s cyanotic body is.

Five rounds, still no response. “I can do this! I can do this! Thirty to two!

Where’s my Unit? What’s taking so long?” During the ninth round of

compressions, Michael draws a gasping breath that sounds to Josh like a death

rattle . . . then he coughs up pool water . . . and gasps for a clearer breath!

“Check for a pulse,” Josh mentally reminds himself. “He’s got one . . . he’s got

one!!” He scoops up Michael and carries him toward the front of the house.

As Johnny screeches the ambulance into the driveway, Josh and Kim are

walking towards them with Michael in Josh’s arms. Michael is responding

only to pain and breathing shallowly at 28 times per minute. He is lifted into

the ambulance. A non-rebreather facemask at 10 liters/minute with sats 96-

100%. Monitors go on. An IV is started. Michael coughs up more water and

becomes more aroused. Seven minutes later he and his family are in the ED at

Tennova Healthcare Jamestown and the crew transfers care to the hospital

staff. Michael is now combative and crying unconsolably and will not open his

eyes, even when his parents speak to him.

The ED physician, nurses Tabitha Owens and Roger Koger and EMT Justin

Dillion immediately complete their assessment. Realizing the potential

problems that may manifest themselves in the next several hours, Dr. Mark

Clapp, contacts Monroe Carroll, Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt Medical

Center and arranges the inter-facility transfer. Tammy Gilbert at Fentress

County 911 contacts Air Evac Lifeteam 014 out of Albany. She again

dispatches Unit 851, this time to the Jamestown Regional Medical Center

landing zone behind Tennova Healthcare to pick up the Air Evac crew with

flight nurse James Owens, flight paramedic Brooke Parrish and pilot Eric

Peterson and to take them to the hospital to assume transfer of care. As

Michael is lifted to the ambulance stretcher, Brooke Parrish gives a safety

briefing to Kimberly. Unit 851 with Michael and the flight crew on board

drives around to the waiting aircraft for a cold load. Fifty-one minutes later

the helicopter safely lands on the Children’s Hospital helipad.

Michael was discharged home the following day with no physical or

neurological injuries.

If you can, first put yourself in Joshua Slaughter’s position that afternoon . . .

the unwanted position of first responder, giving CPR to your own son. How

emotionally stressful that must have been. Then, realize how important CPR

is. Michael’s case is the perfect example of someone who is not breathing and

has no pulse, but getting immediate CPR. And finally, all links in that famous

chain of care . . . 911 dispatcher, county EMS, the regional hospital, Air Evac

Lifeteam . . . coordinated seamlessly, performed professionally and it all

worked perfectly. Because of this, young Michael and his family are here with

us this evening along with all those responsible for fulfilling every link in

Michael’s chain of survival.

It is for these reasons that Fentress County 911, Fentress County EMS, the

regional hospital, and Air Evac Lifeteam 014 receive the 2017 Star of Life

Award for Region 4.

Director Tidwell will now present to Michael and his family his “Certificate of

Life” that reads: “It is hereby certified and solemnly attested that Michael

Slaughter survived a life-threatening event on July 16th, 2016. This certificate

commemorates the first day of the rest of your life.”