



CITY OF MUSCATINE
215 SYCAMORE STREET
MUSCATINE, IA 52761
PH. (563) 264-1550 • FAX (563) 264-0750

CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

For more information contact:

Kevin Jenison
Communication Manager
E-Mail: kjenison@muscatineiowa.gov
Phone: (563) 264-1550 • Fax: (563) 264-0750

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MUSCATINE POLICE OFFICER RECEIVES LIFE SAVING AWARD

Quick action saves life of Muscatine woman averting New Year's Day tragedy

MUSCATINE, Iowa – When Muscatine Police officer Benjamin Varela responded to a call of an unresponsive female in the early afternoon hours of New Year's Day, he had no idea that he would become a hero to a family he never met before.

Officer Varela responded to a report of a 54-year-old female who was seizing and unresponsive at 1:05 p.m. on January 1, 2019. The victim was not breathing and did not have a pulse when Varela arrived and he quickly began chest compressions until the Muscatine Fire Department arrived and took over medical treatment.

In recognition of his life saving efforts, Officer Varela was presented the Muscatine Police Department Life Saving Award certificate along with the Life Saving Medal. Muscatine Mayor Diane Broderson made the presentation during Thursday's (Feb. 7) City Council meeting.

For three minutes Officer Varela worked to revive the Muscatine woman and his tireless effort brought the woman back to life.

"When the fire department arrived, the woman had a pulse and was breathing," Phil Sargent, assistant police chief said.

Fire officials stated that the woman had a consistent heartbeat and shallow breathing prior to her being transported to the hospital.

Officer Varela became a Muscatine Police Officer in December 2016 and has spent most of his life in Muscatine.

“My father is an Iowa State Trooper and we moved her from Western Iowa when he was assigned to this area,” Varela said.

He was looking forward to seeing the woman and her family again but the weather prevented her from attending Thursday night’s ceremony.

“Not everyone who receives CPR survives,” Sargent said. “But she did.”

Her husband told Varela’s supervisors that the cardiologist credits Officer Varela with saving her life by performing CPR.

Thanks to the effort of a young Muscatine police officer, the Muscatine woman is alive today.