



## CASE STUDY

# Second Grade Teacher Gets Second Chance at Life



Sally Sharp, a second grade teacher at the Wheaton Elementary School in Wheaton, MO., was getting ready to eat lunch with three other teachers when the room started spinning. Before she could take a bite of her lunch, she collapsed and everything went blank.

Melissa Creed, Sally's best friend and fellow second-grade teacher, watched her fall from her chair. "She looked as white as a ghost," Melissa remembers.

Melissa suspected Sally, a diabetic, was suffering from low blood sugar but soon realized her situation was far more serious.

Melissa checked Sally to see if she was choking and then checked her pulse. She did not have one. Another teacher, Melissa Hayslip, immediately ran to get the nurse and teacher Debra Menefee ran to the front office to call 911.

"You would have thought we had been trained in what to do in a situation like this," says Melissa Hayslip. "What was amazing was that the three of us went into action at the exact same moment in different ways that helped to save Sally's life."

When Nurse Dana Bartkoski went to the room, while another nurse, Karen Mitchell, retrieved the emergency kit and automated external defibrillator (AED) from their office.

While students and teachers stood praying in the hallway, Dana immediately began CPR. She completed two cycles of compressions before Karen arrived with the ZOLL® AED Plus®.

Dana continued CPR while Karen attached the electrode pads from the AED to Sally. Once attached, the AED advised a shock, and Karen quickly pushed the shock button and stood back. The AED Plus then directed Dana to continue CPR and provided real-time feedback on her compressions through Real CPR Help®. She heard the AED tell her to "Push Harder" and then heard, "Good Compressions."

"The feedback was very helpful," says Dana, who had been instrumental in encouraging the school administration to purchase an AED. After Sally's event, she said that the administration was easily persuaded to purchase a second unit.

"I knew we had an AED, but I would have never gotten it because I didn't know I was capable of using it," Melissa Creed says. "I was so amazed. The nurse popped it open, and it started talking to us."

When Sally regained consciousness, she remembers the school principal looking over her and saying, "Don't you ever do this again or I'm going to write you up." She replied, "I really thought I was a goner."

Sally calls the time she was in sudden cardiac arrest the "twilight moment." She recalls: "I was floating and



*"I would have been dead if the school hadn't had an AED."*

*Survivor Sally Sharp*

I could hear voices, but I couldn't understand what they were saying. I had no idea it was me that something was happening to. Remembering back, though, I must have realized I could be in danger because I started praying, 'Please, God, don't let me die this way.' I knew my husband would want to say goodbye, and this wasn't the way I wanted to go. A blizzard was going to hit a few days later, and I didn't want people to stand outside for my funeral."

Once the paramedics arrived, Sally was transported to Mercy Hospital in Cassville, 30 miles away. She was soon transferred to St. John's in Springfield, where doctors diagnosed her with a rare arrhythmic heartbeat and surgically implanted an internal defibrillator (ICD).

Sally recuperated at home for nearly five weeks before returning to school. During that time, and even now, she experiences a lot of different emotions. "I had just turned 45 and I felt lost. I was very weak physically and wasn't used to not being able to move very fast. I was trying to make sense of why it happened and why to me. It took about a good year before I got all the parts of the story put together. Even now, there's stuff out there I still don't know."

### **An Advocate for AEDs**

Sally says that her sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) has changed her life. Working with a coach, she has lost 70 pounds through diet and exercise. She also hopes to help change the lives of others.

Two weeks after her SCA, Sally began legislating to mandate that every high school student in Missouri must take a 30-minute course on CPR training and AED use in order to graduate. She and Melissa Creed have been working with Missouri's legislature to pass a bill to that affect. While the bill passed in the House last

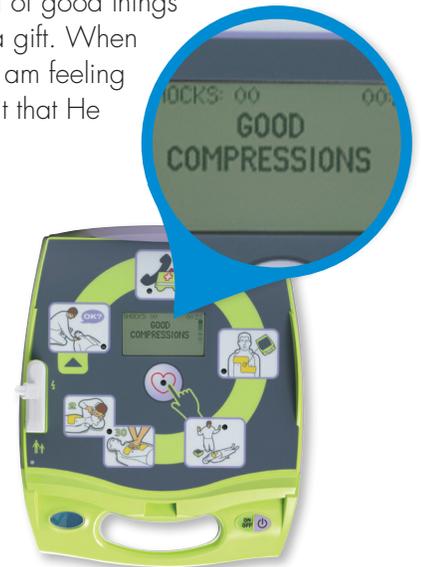
year, it did not make it through the state senate. "The senate is opposed to any kind of mandate. However, unless it's mandated, it won't be enforced," Sally says.

Both Sally and Melissa, who are now CPR-certified, have not given up. They plan to return to the floor to battle for the bill again. In the meantime, they make sure to teach their young students how not to be intimidated by AEDs.

"Sally has been the poster child for AEDs and has been eager to tell everyone about her ordeal," says nurse Dana Bartkoski.

Sally is a strong believer that the AED saved her life. "The paramedics took a while—20 to 30 minutes—to get to me because the 911 dispatch system was down," Sally adds. "I would have been dead if the school hadn't had an AED and nurses hadn't hooked it up. Since then, I've had two grandkids and would have missed out on a lot of good things in my life. Every day is a gift. When your time is up, it's up. I am feeling very blessed God saw fit that He wasn't done with me."

The ZOLL AED Plus, the first and only Full-Rescue AED that provides Real CPR Help® for depth and rate of chest compressions, audibly coaches rescuers with prompts that say "Push Harder" or "Good Compressions" during CPR.



For more information on the ZOLL AED Plus, please call 800-804-4356 or go to [www.zoll.com/aedplus](http://www.zoll.com/aedplus).

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