



## **2013 Russell Medal**

### **Brittany Sherwood**

On 30<sup>th</sup> May 2013 Brittany Sherwood, a Lifesaving Society Canada award holder aged 17, was at home alone with her father. Her father had been experiencing severe acid reflux pains for several weeks, on the advice of his doctor had doubled up on his medication but was still in terrible pain. That afternoon he arrived home early from a business trip as he was feeling unwell and went to lie down. After a while Brittany's father went through to Brittany's room and asked her to "crack his back". He leaned against the edge of the bed while Brittany pressed on his back hoping it would crack but it didn't. Knowing that lying down on the floor would increase the discomfort her father did so asking Brittany to be quick, Brittany did as her father asked and cracked his back. He then got up slowly onto his knees with his head down when he suddenly collapsed.

Brittany ran to her father yelling "Dad, Dad, are you OK?" and on looking at him saw that his face was purple with his eyes rolling to the back of his head. Brittany moved her father into the recovery position and called 911. Once Brittany had explained to 911 what had happened she moved all the books that her father had fallen on and rolled him onto a flat surface on his back, she checked for breathing but there was nothing, she checked to see if anything was in his mouth and there was nothing so as instructed by 911 Brittany started compressions. While administering compressions Brittany heard and felt her dad's rib crack and at one point he took one deep breath. Brittany who was in the process of completing her lifeguarding course and only 2 weeks earlier had taken her RLSS First Aid/CPR/AED course, remembered that if the casualty took a deep breath and they were snorting, like her father was, the casualty could die. Despite having this in her mind Brittany kept going until the emergency services arrived 7 minutes later. They took over, started compressions and then applied AED paddles to her father and once he was as stable as they could make him transferred him to hospital.

It transpired that Brittany's father had suffered a massive heart attack and had gone into cardiac arrest and within 20 minutes of arriving at hospital was having a stent inserted to open a 100% blockage. He was kept in a coma for 36 hours and the family were advised they he might have suffered some level of brain trauma. Incredibly he was discharged from hospital 6 days later and has now had a CT scan which shows no sign of any damage.

**It is without a doubt that Brittany saved her father's life, showing incredible bravery and composure in this very real life or death situation, and for this she has been awarded the 2013 Russell Medal**