

Team Merit Award 2009
Patricia Ramsey, Jacob Ashdown, Patrick Luz, Cynthia Stoker, Jacy Goolsby

On the evening of April 9, 2009, a wireless call came into the Lubbock Communications Center. The only information the caller could get out was, "help me...can't breathe...help!" The voice sounded as if it was pleading from a distance and it was impossible to tell if it was a man or woman, much less from where it was coming.

Immediately, Patricia Ramsey checked the screen and found it was a phase two call. She quickly put the coordinates into the mapping software. As she entered the call sheet, she continued to try to gather information from the caller, but was unsuccessful. Despite numerous questions, no one would answer. Was the caller still there? Was the caller able to breathe? Patricia changed tactics, looking for another way to communicate. She asked the caller to push any button on the phone to let her know if they were still on the line. She waited, not breathing herself in order not to miss something. There was no sound.

Jacob Ashdown, training on the primary dispatch channel, and his trainer Patrick Luz, dispatched the call within one minute of its entry. They explained to the responding officers about the open 9-1-1 line and that the location had been determined via coordinates without verification from the caller.

Jacy Goolsby, who was manning another position within the Communications Center, informed EMS of the situation and the general location. Patricia used the rebid transmission function to update the coordinates in the hopes of obtaining a more accurate location. This time, the location was shown two blocks from the initial bid and units were directed to the new location.

Jacy called the wireless carrier and requested the customer's personal information, stressing to the operator this was an emergency and the life of the caller was at stake. The address obtained from the carrier showed a location for a female customer very close to the rebid location.

Jacob and Patrick made sure the officers involved were notified of the update. Everyone in the dispatch center and in the field was focused on finding the caller and delivering the aid she so desperately begged for in the few words she had.

During this time, Patricia was listening on the open line, trying to get a response from the caller. Although no one answered, Patricia continued to speak to the caller, trying to get her to possibly make a noise of any kind which might help in locating her. The entire time, she reassured the caller help was on the way, hoping that if the caller could hear, it would give her the will to hang on a little longer.

Officers arrived in the area with sirens blazing. They were guided by Patricia who led them by using the sounds from their sirens. In frustration, the officers pulled up to a gated apartment complex.

Cynthia Stoker, who was working a secondary position, attempted to contact a representative for the apartment complex, but all the contact numbers had been disconnected. Meanwhile, Patricia was still trying to elicit a response from the caller and providing information to Cynthia who continued to relay the updated information by radio to the officers in the field.

Half an hour after the call first came in, officers discovered a woman lying face down in a residence. Patricia could hear over the line as officers forced their way into the complex and EMS attendants feverishly attempted to awaken the woman and deliver medical attention.

This team worked together and by doing so, helped keep a woman alive. Officers on the scene determined the woman had a massive asthma attack which closed her breathing passages. Without air to breathe or speak, she had passed out. Had dispatchers not worked so closely together to gather information and relay into the field, this woman would not have survived. It is for this reason I take pride in nominating this team for the Team Merit award.

KK Bryan
Public Safety Dispatcher II
Lubbock Police Department Communications Center