

Agency's Boeing Seattle Deputy Director Saves a Life

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Each summer, most kids look forward to summer camp. For Defense Contract Management Agency Boeing Seattle Deputy Director Jerry Smith and his wife, Rebecca, it is a special time to give back to children in need.

Smith and his wife volunteer as camp counselors — “grandparents” — for Royal Kids Camp, a nonprofit organization that provides weeklong summer camp programs for emotionally or physically abused or



Rebecca Smith, left, and her husband, Jerry, stand next to Phil Woodhouse, a fellow camp counselor at the Royal Kids Camp, Bothell, Wash. Jerry saved Woodhouse's life by performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation on Woodhouse after suffering a heart attack in the camp pool and drowning. (Photo courtesy of Jerry Smith)

neglected elementary-age children in Bothell, Wash.

Grandparents in real life, the Smiths love children and thought this would be a great way to give back to the community.

“We got involved through a friend who is a foster parent. She inspired us to think about getting involved. We saw the impact, firsthand, that her family had on the two foster kids that they eventually adopted,” said Smith. “Their example of reaching out to foster kids, even after adopting two children, got us thinking about the opportunity.”

The Smiths attended three days of intense training focusing on working with physically and mentally abused children.

“The children that attend this camp would generally not be able to fit into a normal summer camp situation. There are often lots of behavioral problems and emotional problems involved, mostly due to neglect and abuse in their backgrounds,” said Smith. “The bottom line is they are just 7- to 11-year-old kids in need of attention and love.”

This was the first year the Smiths volunteered as counselors with Royal Family Kids Camp. Adding to the challenge of working with abused children was another unexpected event —

the near drowning of a fellow camp counselor.

On the second day of camp, Smith went to the pool to participate in a polar bear swim with his children. On arrival at the pool, Phil Woodhouse, a fellow counselor, was dragged, unconscious, from the bottom of the pool.

“Jerry ... stepped in to give artificial respiration to a man whose face was blue, his skin was white, his mouth tightly shut and whose eyes were wide open. He was, without question, dead,” said Scott Winter, Royal Family Kids director. According to Winter, Smith remained calm and helped get Woodhouse out of the pool. Winters began heart compressions while Smith performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The two worked together for more than 20 minutes until fire department paramedics arrived. The paramedics informed them that Woodhouse was still alive as they loaded him for transport to the hospital.

Winters and Smith later learned that Woodhouse had suffered a massive heart attack in the pool. Less than four percent of people who suffer such a heart attack even make it to the hospital. Once at the hospital, less than two percent of such heart attack



victims even recover. Woodhouse remained hospitalized for 10 days before going home.

“The doctors were not sure if I would pull out of the coma and be OK,” said Woodhouse. “The care I received at the pool truly saved my life and gave the rest of this miracle a chance to be.” Woodhouse did make a full recovery and recently returned to singing with his church choir.

Fellow DCMA Boeing employees learned about Smith’s heroism in a quiet way. According to a co-worker, Smith is not a braggart. When one asked how his week of volunteer work went at Royal Family Kids Camp recently, Smith simply replied, “challenging.” 

(Image courtesy of iStockphoto)