

## General Information

### KUMC student saves a child's life

Dec 8, 2010

Nick Shields won't graduate from the University of Kansas School of Allied Health until May 2013, but he's already saved a life.

Back in June, Shields was celebrating at his nephew's birthday party when a young girl came running from across the street, yelling that someone was drowning.

"When I got to the pool, it was immediately obvious that something was seriously wrong," says Shields. "It looked like the child had just been pulled from the water. His skin was grey and blue and his father was in a panic." Shields quickly explained that he had been a critical care nurse for six years, and asked the father to step aside and let Shields try to revive his son. "At that point," Shields says, "he stepped back and let me work."



With his family and friends nearby, Shields began to perform CPR. After about two minutes, the boy began to cough up water. Shields then turned the boy on his side and continued to monitor his vital signs until an ambulance arrived. Hours later, he heard that the boy was expected to make a full recovery.

Nick Shields accepts a certificate of appreciation from Cy Ritter, Deputy Chief of the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department.

On October 26, 2010, Shields accepted a certificate of appreciation from Cy Ritter, Deputy Chief of the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department.

Looking back on the experience, Shields says, "I definitely gained some confidence in my abilities. As a critical care nurse, I've responded to hundreds of patients who were fighting for their life. The difference is, in the hospital you have protocols to follow, people to back you up and machines to provide you with instant patient information. Outside the hospital, you're on your own; you know what you're supposed to do, but whether you're able to perform is another story."

The fact that Shields has already put his training to work has extra significance, considering what inspired him to attend KU Medical Center in the first place. On May 10, 1997, Nick and his best friend were driving to Lawrence to go bowling when they were involved in a head-on car wreck. After regaining consciousness two weeks later, Nick would learn that in addition to breaking his legs and one of his arms, he and his friend had both torn their aortas. Both had been life-flighted from the accident to The University of Kansas Hospital and each had received life-saving open-heart surgery upon arrival.

"If you consider that we survived an accident with a 90 percent mortality rate, we were extremely fortunate to receive such amazing care," Shields says. "The treatment that I received while at the KU Medical Center was what inspired me to become a nurse and then continue into nurse anesthesia. It's also why I have an affiliation with KU. It's a terrific hospital and I'm proud to be going to school here."

Shields appreciates the recognition he's received for saving the child's life, but he says there's a more important point to his story.

"My only hope is the story exposes people to the importance of CPR," he says. "Learning CPR isn't difficult or time consuming – people just need to be proactive. Who knows, they might save someone's life."

To learn more about CPR and where to take a training course, [click here](#).

[Email this article](#) | [View All School of Health Professions News](#) | [School of Health Professions web site](#)