

# MEDIA RELEASE



## St John volunteers give the gift of life for Christmas

**22 December 2009.** An Ashfield family has received a great Christmas present this year from the hands of two St John Ambulance volunteers: Their dad's life.

54-year-old Frank Funibaldi was competing in a Masters Swimming event on Saturday 12 December at Auburn Aquatic Centre when he collapsed as a result of a sudden cardiac arrest.

Metres away, Michael Valentin and James Spiller, both St John volunteers from Granville Division, arrived quickly on the scene. After a minute of CPR, they used a defibrillator to shock Frank's heart into a normal rhythm. The casualty was then taken by paramedics to Westmead hospital.

"We were finishing off a quiet shift when we saw Frank collapsing in the stands, and without any hesitation, we grabbed our oxygen equipment and defibrillator and went to Frank's aid" said James Spiller, who joined St John in March this year.

"Upon our arrival, Frank was showing no signs of life. Whilst James attached the Defibrillator I secured the airway and administered oxygen", said Michael Valentin, who is also an Enrolled Nurse and has been a St John volunteer since 2000.

Frank, who is now recovering at home after being discharged from hospital yesterday, met the two volunteers who saved his life and thanked them.

"They brought me back. What more can I say?"

"I can now spend Christmas with my family", he said.

Major General Warren Glenny (Rtd), Commissioner of St John (NSW), said the defibrillator machine which saved Frank was donated by Auburn RSL.

"We would like to thank Auburn RSL for donating this life-saving machine to Granville Division and the swimming pool lifeguards who helped our volunteers.

"This incident highlights not only the importance of St John Volunteers to the community but also the importance of knowing first aid."

Every year in NSW, 3,100 St John first aid volunteers attend more than 5,000 events and treat over 24,000 casualties. They also provide over 430,000 voluntary hours, the equivalent of 50 years of volunteering, in one.

To know more about St John (NSW) call 1300 360 455 or visit [www.stjohnnsw.com.au](http://www.stjohnnsw.com.au).

**ENDS**

**Notes to editor:**

Photo opportunity: Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 10:00am

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