



American Red Cross
Michigan Region



Red Cross honors 3 Farmington Hills lifeguards with Lifesaving Award

*They came to the aid of a co-worker who collapsed at work
and showed signs of cardiac arrest.*

DETROIT (June 26, 2025) – The American Red Cross honored three city of Farmington Hills lifeguards with a Lifesaving Award today for their heroic actions that helped saved the life of a co-worker who collapsed in the office in September 2024. When their co-worker showed signs of cardiac arrest, the lifeguards used CPR and an AED to help her regain consciousness before paramedics arrived.

Fana Rombou, Amy Gunn-Gill and Vanessa Hersey-Tartt each received the American Red Cross Lifesaving Award for Professional Responders. The award includes a Citation and Lapel Pin, and is bestowed on professional responders like lifeguards, police, firefighters, and healthcare workers. All three received Red Cross first aid and CPR training.

They were credited with coming to the aid of Janet Dabish, a senior transportation dispatcher for the city.

"Fana, Amy and Vanessa, your lifesaving action exemplifies the mission of the Red Cross to prevent and alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies. Thank you for your willingness to help Janet who was in distress," Kelly King, regional chief executive officer of the Red Cross Michigan Region, said during an award presentation at The Hawk, the city of Farmington Hills Recreation and Arts Venue.

Rombou said every second counts in an emergency. "This experience reminded me that in a crisis, being calm, prepared, and responsive can truly make the difference between life and loss. As a lifeguard and lifeguard instructor, I know the difference we make doesn't stop at the water's edge," she said.

Hannah Muth nominated the lifeguards for the lifesaving award and serves as recreation supervisor for Farmington Hills.

"I am regularly impressed by Amy, Fana and Vanessa's dedication to the craft of lifeguarding, and I am beyond proud to be able to work with them every day," Muth said. "All three award recipients are Red Cross-certified lifeguard instructors who train the next generation in Farmington Hills, but learning CPR and other lifesaving skills is just as important for everyday people, too."

Dabish, who had a defibrillator and pacemaker implanted as a result of the incident and is doing well today, praised the three lifeguards for their heroic actions. "I wouldn't be here if it weren't for them," she said.

She encouraged others to take CPR training, adding "you have to be ready if (an emergency) happens."

The Red Cross National Lifesaving Awards is a program dating back to 1911 that recognizes those who – in a time of an emergency – used their lifesaving skills or knowledge to save or sustain a life. The program consists of three awards, the Certificate of Merit, the Lifesaving Award for Professional Responders, and the Certificate of Extraordinary Personal Action.

These awards and their recipients embody the spirit and mission of the Red Cross by using action to alleviate human suffering in the face of an emergency.

Since 2018, the Red Cross has honored more than 3,200 individuals worldwide. Their heroism has helped save more than 1,600 lives.

Dabish was at her desk at the Costick Activities Center in the early afternoon of September 3, 2024. A senior dispatcher for senior transportation for Farmington Hills, Dabish was enjoying some quiet moments of solitude at her desk when she suddenly lost consciousness. Her colleagues in transportation services took notice immediately and called 911 and went to get help from the lifeguards.

Rombou, who by happenstance was nearby, rushed over to help. She helped move Dabish from her chair to the floor. In checking on Dabish, Rombou found a pulse and noticed she was extremely warm.

The co-worker who called 911 placed the phone next to Rombou who then began performing CPR using chest compressions and rescue breaths under the direction of the 911 dispatcher. Her lifeguard teammates Gunn-Gill and Hersey-Tartt then arrived on scene with an AED and prepared for defibrillation. Dabish was shocked once, then Rombou and a Farmington Hills police officer who had arrived on scene rotated performing CPR.

Rombou and the police officer continued to perform CPR and delivered a second shock to Dabish from the AED. It was at this point that Dabish regained consciousness and opened her eyes. She was then transported by Farmington Hills paramedics to a local hospital.

"I couldn't be prouder of Amy, Fana and Vanessa whose swift action and teamwork saved our colleague's life," said Ellen Schnackel, director of Special Services for Farmington Hills. "Their response and the positive outcome of this situation are powerful reminders of why we take training so seriously. Their skill and composure reflect the very best of what it means to be a lifeguard, a first responder and a public servant."

The Red Cross has been creating courses and training people in first aid and CPR for more than 100 years. Red Cross training provides the skills and confidence to act in an emergency. For those interested in our lifesaving courses, visit redcross.org/TakeAClass.

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About the American Red Cross:

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides comfort to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; distributes international humanitarian aid; and supports veterans, military members and their families. The Red Cross is a nonprofit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to deliver its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org or CruzRojaAmericana.org, or follow us on social media.

About the City of Farmington Hills:

The City of Farmington Hills is a place where everyone is welcome. Founded in 1973, it is one of the largest and most diverse communities in Oakland County. Farmington Hills is home to more than 83,000 residents who speak more than 60 languages, and more than 75 Fortune 500 businesses, including multinational corporations like Nissan and Bosch. The City is known for its extensive amenities, including over 600 acres of parks, 90 athletic fields, six miles of hiking and walking trails, the Farmington Hills Golf Club, and an Ice Arena. Farmington Hills is also home to The Hawk, an award-winning, 245,000-square-foot recreation and arts venue, which includes The Hawk Theatre and The Hawk Makerspace. For more information, visit www.fhgov.com, or follow the City on social media.