

Published March 6th, 2019

## SMC student honored by MOFD for heroic lifesaving efforts

By Nick Marnell



Courtney Newton speaks at the Feb. 20 MOFD board meeting. Fire Chief Dave Winnacker and President Steven Danziger look on. Photo Dennis Rein, MOFD

Courtney Newton rarely visits the Moraga Starbucks, but one 57-year-old man is undoubtedly grateful that she did the afternoon of Jan. 27.

As the Saint Mary's College student studied with her roommate in the coffee shop, a woman ran inside, asking if anyone knew CPR. Newton, recently recertified for CPR by the American Heart Association, responded immediately and ran to the outdoor patio.

She saw a man collapsed on the ground, bleeding from his mouth. His face had turned blue. He was unresponsive. "I yelled for one of the 15 or so people around me to call 911," Newton said, as she scanned the man's prone body and flipped him over on his back. She began compressions and using her CPR pocket mask, she administered three rounds of CPR before emergency responders from the Moraga-Orinda Fire District arrived, less than two-and-one-half minutes after dispatch. The crew took over and used a Lucas device to deliver consistent, uninterrupted chest compressions. The

patient was taken to the hospital and is expected to fully recover.

"Unequivocally, her actions helped save the man's life," said MOFD Capt. Brian Oliver, who directed the crew at the scene. "It's fantastic when someone responds to the moment. It takes a high degree of courage, and her actions were commendable."

Commendable to the degree that the MOFD board of directors publicly recognized Newton at its Feb. 20 district meeting, issuing a proclamation honoring Newton's lifesaving efforts. "When I received the report about this call, the crew obviously relayed the competency with which you provided the care," Fire Chief Dave Winnacker said to Newton. "But they mentioned over and over again the calmness with which you approached the scene. So, we're hiring!"

Unfortunately for the chief, Newton plans to attend law school. She said this incident helped inspire her to practice law in the health care industry. "I want to draft a policy that requires an AED in every public space, because I see the need," she said. The Moraga Starbucks does not have an automated external defibrillator.

As befitting someone who exhibited such care for others, Newton deflected all praise to others. "I want to thank my parents for teaching me to always do the right thing in times of need, to never be afraid and to always have courage," Newton said at the meeting.

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