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Moraga Resident Cheats Death Thanks to MOFD Response

By Nick Marnell



From left: MOFD captain Mike Rattary, firefighter-paramedic Andrew Hess, Martina Scanlan, Matt Scanlan, firefighter-paramedic Andrew Leach, firefighter Mark DeWeese.
Photo Gint Federas

him on a heart monitor, which recorded 230 beats per minute. Into Medic 41 they hustled him, off to John Muir Hospital.

"This was a serious enough call that we put two paramedics in the back of the ambulance on the drive to the hospital," DeWeese said. Though it is not the usual protocol, the crew allowed Martina to ride along in the front seat. During the transport, she said she heard a firefighter update her husband's condition. "Code Blue!" he said.

Scanlan had gone into cardiac arrest.

Thanks to the work in the rear of that ambulance by firefighter-paramedics Dave Iman and Andrew Leach, Scanlan pulled through. "I am lucky to be alive," he said. "The doctor told me that, after my crash, I had only a 4 percent chance of survival."

Scanlan, chief executive officer of RS Investments in San Francisco and an executive leader of the American Heart Association, praised the work of the MOFD responders at an April district board meeting.

"My career has nothing to do with public safety, but I am aware of what makes a good team," Scanlan told the directors. "People who trust each other, who work together and who work well in a time of crisis. These kinds of success stories don't happen without a total team effort. The professionalism, and the calm, that your crew displayed was sensational."

He also stressed the importance of the calm behavior of Martina. DeWeese agreed. "She acted much better than one would have expected," the firefighter said.

Director Fred Weil noted that the district is often criticized for sending both an ambulance and an

Matt Scanlan could hardly breathe. He felt dizzy. As his heart raced, he started to sweat. His arms went numb; he could not raise them over his head. Having had a heart valve replaced, Scanlan knew that these symptoms portended something serious. He yelled from the shower for his wife to call 911.

Moraga-Orinda Fire District station 41 received the dispatch around 11 p.m. March 3. Under the direction of Captain Mike Rattary the ambulance crew arrived at the Sanders Ranch residence in minutes, followed by the engine crew seconds later. They arrived to a chaotic scene, with Scanlan lying in the upstairs master suite, alert, but having difficulty speaking; a neighbor trying to help; and his wife, Martina, answering questions about her husband's medical history.

"It was a monster house, with a sweeping spiral staircase that led up to the suite," said firefighter Mark DeWeese. The firefighters brought Scanlan downstairs, started an IV, applied oxygen and put

engine to respond to medical incidents.

"Obviously, in this case, it was necessary," he said.

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