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Girl Scout hero awarded national Medal of Honor

Michelle Dutton, a Dublin resident, was awarded the Girl Scouts of the USA Medal of Honor recently for administering CPR at the scene of a car accident last summer that brought an unconscious driver back to consciousness.

During a heavy thunderstorm on July 20, 2009, Dutton, age 18 at the time, was traveling home from a softball game around 6:30 p.m. with her mother, who was driving, when they witnessed a car hit a light pole at the intersection of Linworth and Snouffer Roads. As they drove past, they noticed the driver, a man, was not moving. Dutton went to the accident scene while her mother, Penny, parked their car, and saw that the driver's face had turned blue, he wasn't breathing and was unconscious.

Michelle and two others pulled the driver from the car. "There was a woman passenger in his car who kept screaming, 'Someone save him!'" said Michelle. "I said I knew CPR and nobody else there did, so I began to administer CPR. I don't remember how many reps I'd given, but one of the ladies said she felt a pulse and then slowly he started to cough and come around."

The man was transported by ambulance to a hospital and the Duttons never knew anything more about him.

Michelle had worked at the Liberty/Powell YMCA for more than a year as a lifeguard and had been trained there in CPR for the professional rescuer (CPRPR). She thought perhaps she would use her lifesaving training at work, but never thought she'd use it on the street. Her mother is a nurse at Riverside Methodist Hospital and is certified in CPR, but by the time she had parked the car and arrived at the accident, Michelle had already revived the driver.

The Girl Scout Medal of Honor is given to a Girl Scout for saving life or attempting to save life without risk to the candidate's own life. The award is reserved for those Girl Scouts who have performed heroic acts beyond the degree of maturity and training to be expected at their age.

Girl Scouts of the United States of America CEO Kathy Cloninger stated in a letter to Michelle, "Your extraordinary actions not only saved a life, but serve as a shining example for all Girl Scouts, everywhere. You have shown outstanding judgment and incredible courage in saving a life. We commend you for your quick thinking. You have truly made the world a better place."

Michelle received the award at a Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland Council recognition program May 11, 2010. She is a 2009 graduate of Worthington Kilbourne High School and currently is a nursing student at Bellarmine University in Louisville.

Founded in 1912, Girl Scouts of the USA is the premier leadership development program for girls age 5 to 18. The mission is to build girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place. Girl Scouts is shaping the next generation of women leaders through leadership and service in the arts, science, technology, environment, etiquette and manners, and numerous other experiences that are contemporary, compelling and relevant to today's girls.

Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland Council, headquartered in Columbus, serves 35,000 girls and 10,000 adult volunteers in 30 counties: Adams, Ashland, Coshocton, Crawford, Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Gallia, Guernsey, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Jackson, Knox, Licking, Madison, Marion, Morrow, Muskingum, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Richland, Ross, Scioto, Union, Vinton, Wayne and Wyandot.

For information on how to join, volunteer, or donate to Girl Scouts, call (800) 621-7042 or visit www.gsohiosheartland.org.

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