

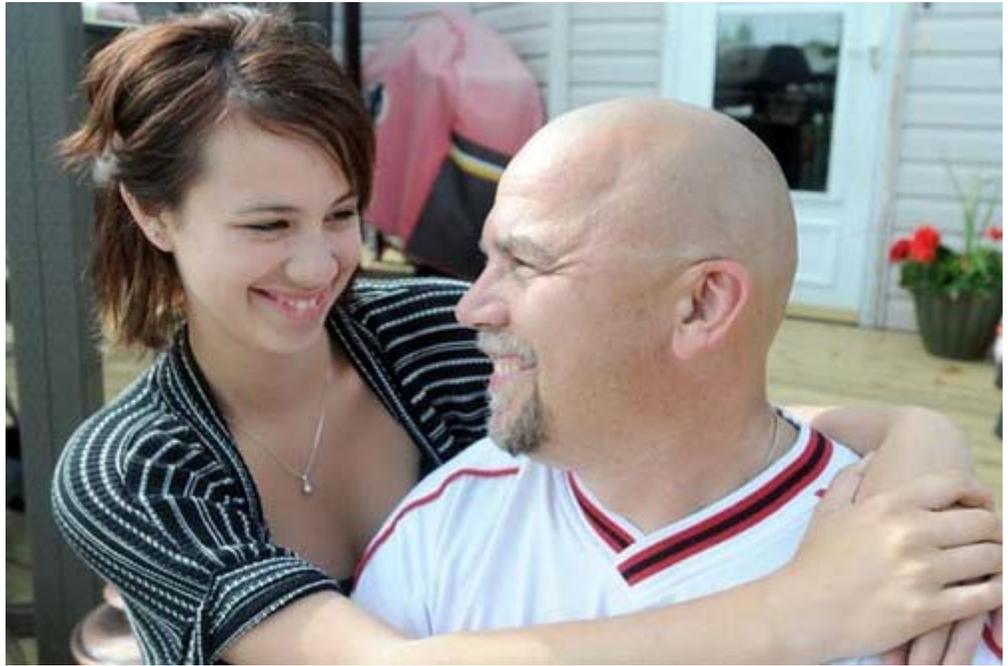
16-year-old credited with saving her dad's life by phoning 911

By PALOMA MIGONE

Renée Dubé knew something wasn't right.

Her father Rob had come home after watching a UFC fight at a friend's house with chest pains, a numb arm and nausea.

"I started asking him about other symptoms," said 16-year-old Renée.



"He was quite flushed and very sweaty; he just didn't look right and he said his arm was tingling."

"I asked him if he thought he might be having a heart attack and he said there was no way and that he was too young. But I specifically remember my teacher telling me that denial was a huge part of having a heart attack for a lot of people."

The Composite high school student had learned about CPR through the ACT High School CPR Program in her gym class the previous week, so her father's denial wasn't enough to calm her worries.

"I was wondering that maybe I was over-reacting and maybe it was just seeing it that way because I had just taken the course. But something just wasn't settling in my stomach and I normally follow my intuition quite strongly – I knew it wasn't OK."

Rob headed to bed to sleep the pain off, thinking it was indigestion.

"I brushed it off to be something else and if it kept on the next day, then I might go and get it checked out. That wasn't good enough for her," he said.

Renée contacted a family friend who is a nurse at the QEII Hospital, and she advised her to call an ambulance. Trying to stay calm, Renée called 911.

In five minutes, paramedics arrived at their home, rushing into the bedroom to attend to her father. Rob opened his eyes to seven people in his bedroom and a woman shaking him awake, asking if he was OK.

"It took me a few seconds to figure out what was going on."

He was rushed to the hospital. Whether Rob had a heart-attack has yet to be determined as he is still undergoing tests. But when in the hospital, it was clear Renée had saved his life.

"They said that if I hadn't called, the next day he would have felt fine and (then) had a full-blown heart attack; he might have not even woken up from his sleep," she said. "They think it was a minor heart attack, but they are still not positive."

Wanting to join the medical field, the Grade 10 student was intrigued and excited to learn about CPR the previous week. The ACT High School CPR Program is offered to all Grade 10 students in gym class and is made possible through the support of the ACT (Advanced Coronary Treatment) Foundation's partners: STARS Foundation and Alberta Education.

If it wasn't for the program, Renée said, things would have gone differently on that mid-October night – she wouldn't have thought much of her father's symptoms.

"It was like a regular night, except that I knew something wasn't right. I definitely think a lot of youth should pay attention to this class because it's not just a 'maybe' situation; it happens every day.

"It can be on the street or in your own home. It can be someone you know or some random person you just see, but it's definitely a good skill to have and be aware of."

Renée's heroic action hasn't gone unnoticed. Phys-ed teacher Nicole Martens nominated her for a ACT's Lifesaver Award, which is for participants who have saved lives with their CPR skills. Renée was one of the winners.

"I definitely wasn't expecting it, so when my gym teacher contacted me and told me she had submitted me into the contest, I was really excited."

Martens said she was proud her student had utilized her freshly-taught skills.

"She did everything right; everything she was supposed to do. She listened in the class, remembered it and acted."

Martens isn't the only person impressed with Renée. Rob is also proud of his daughter and thankful she took the initiative to dial 911.

"Who knows if I'd be here today if it wasn't for her. If she would have just gone along with me, I might not be here, so I'm very happy she did ignore my comments and followed her gut that something was wrong."