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Cy-Fair ISD Deputy Terrence Brooks Honored After Quick Action Saves Choking Student

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There are plenty of reasons a student might seek out a police officer on a school campus. On Aug. 28, one **Cypress-Fairbanks ISD** student did so because they could not breathe.

The student had begun choking on a piece of chicken during lunch and, unable to clear the obstruction, ran directly to Deputy Terrence Brooks with the **Cypress-Fairbanks ISD Police Department**.

Brooks recognized the emergency immediately, performed the Heimlich maneuver and dislodged the food blocking the student's airway.

A little more than two weeks later, that frightening cafeteria moment took center stage at the **Berry Center**, where educators, law enforcement leaders, healthcare representatives and members of the Cy-Fair business community came together to honor the officer whose quick action helped a student breathe again.

Brooks was named the First Responder Honoree during the **Cypress Fairbanks-Houston Chamber of Commerce** General Membership Luncheon on Tuesday, Sept. 15, where he received recognition from the Chamber, the Texas Society Sons of the American Revolution's Robert Rankin Chapter and his own CFISD Police Department.

A Moment That Could Have Ended Very Differently

CFISD Police Chief Eric Mendez read the department's account of the choking incident before Brooks received its Life Saving Award.

"Officer Brooks immediately recognized that the student was in distress and experiencing a life-threatening medical emergency. Without hesitation, and with confidence in his training, Officer Brooks took immediate action and performed the Heimlich maneuver on the student. His intervention successfully dislodged the obstruction and allowed the student to breathe again."

It is the kind of emergency that can unfold in just a few frantic moments, with little time to think through what comes next.

For the students and staff who witnessed it, Brooks' response was also a reminder of one of the less visible roles campus police officers can play every day. Their work may include security and law enforcement, but it can just as quickly become first aid, emergency response or simply being the nearest trained adult when something goes wrong.

"The impact of Officer Brooks' actions was also evident in the reactions of the students and staff who witnessed the incident. His willingness to immediately step forward when a student needed help exemplifies our department's commitment to protecting and serving the students and staff of Cypress-Fairbanks ISD."

For families across CFISD, that may be the part of the story that hits closest to home. A student needed help in an ordinary place — a school cafeteria — during an ordinary part of the day. The right person happened to be nearby, recognized the danger and acted.

A Cy-Fair Community Says Thank You

Tuesday's luncheon gave the community a chance to recognize that response publicly.

The Cypress Fairbanks-Houston Chamber of Commerce presented Brooks with a certificate of appreciation.

Tom Jackson, representing the **SAR Robert Rankin Chapter**, then presented Brooks with the SAR Life Saving Commendation, which recognizes individuals who save a human life without necessarily placing themselves in imminent danger.

Brooks also received the SAR Law Enforcement Commendation Medal and Certificate, an honor presented to those who have served with distinction and devotion in law enforcement.

Jackson began by looking back to the country's earliest years, telling the audience about the Battle of Harlem Heights and the service of Colonel Thomas Knowlton and Captain Nathan Hale.

He then connected that history of service to the officer standing in front of the room.

"That School Teacher was Captain Nathan Hale, whose famous line is remembered as ' I regret that I have but one life to give for my country.'"

And then, bringing the focus firmly back home to Cy-Fair, Jackson said:

"It is most appropriate that today we recognize Officer Terrence Brooks of the Cypress Fairbanks School District Police Force who gave a life back in the performance of his duty."

The CFISD Police Department also presented Brooks with its own Life Saving Award under the department's awards and recognition program.

The significance of the afternoon was less about how many certificates or medals were presented and more about why so many groups wanted to be part of recognizing him.

Among the community and business leaders in the room were CFISD Superintendent Dr. Douglas Killian; CFISD Police Chief Eric Mendez; Assistant Chief Shane Wallace; Sgt. Juan Ibarra; SAR Robert Rankin Chapter representative Tom Jackson; and HCA Houston Healthcare representatives Carley Childs, Kayla Mauldin and Lindsey Wise, who attended as part of the luncheon's First Responder Sponsor.

Deputy Brooks stood in the middle of them.

For a school district as large as Cypress-Fairbanks ISD, the moment carried a deeply personal weight – one student in immediate danger, one officer prepared to respond, and a decision that may have changed the outcome entirely.

More Than an Award

Stories about school safety often center on policies, procedures and large-scale security efforts. This one came down to something much simpler: a student in trouble found an adult who was ready to help.

Brooks' training mattered. So did his ability to remain calm enough to use it.

The student was able to breathe again. Students and staff saw one of their campus officers step in during a frightening emergency. And weeks later, the wider Cy-Fair community gathered to make sure the moment did not pass without recognition.

The recognition at Tuesday's luncheon gave the wider Cy-Fair community a chance to acknowledge just how much that moment mattered. Because when seconds mattered, Deputy Brooks was ready—and a student went home to their family.

By **Tiffany Krenek**, My Neighborhood News



Tiffany Krenek has been on the *My Neighborhood News* team since August 2021. She is passionate about curating and sharing content that enriches the lives of our readers in a personal, meaningful way. A loving mother and wife, Tiffany and her family live in the West Houston/Cypress region.