Heimlich Hero Saves Patient's Life

The Heimlich maneuver is something you hope you never have to use, but for Hermilio "Milo" Contreras, CNA at Newport Nursing and Rehabilitation, knowing that simple maneuver was a literal lifesaver.

It was Friday, February 12, and patient Nancy Fisher was sitting in bed, doing a food preference interview with Nuria Mondria, the facility's dietary supervisor. As they continued their conversation, Fisher began to eat her food. She was doing so with no issue, when all of a sudden she was unable to speak, and her lips were turning purple.

Mondria acted quickly, sending out a Code Blue alert. Contreras and Dan Head, rehab director, ran into the room, quickly followed by an oxygen tank, an AED, a crash cart, and other personnel. Observing Fisher's purple lips, Conteras sprang into action, delivering ten abdominal thrusts to dislodge the object in her throat.

Fisher coughed and immediately was able to talk. With supervision from Conteras and a few nurses, Fisher began to take sips of water to clear her throat.

"The quick action of Milo and the rest of the staff really saved Mrs. Fisher's life," says Robert Gerken, administrator at Newport Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. "The rest of the day everyone was complimenting Milo on his heroic job. He truly defines the [Generations] mission statement through his actions. Mrs. Fisher is glad to have an angel in Milo."

It's sobering to think what may have happened if Fisher was not surrounded by medical personnel when that bit of food lodged in her throat.

"So often in today's climate, hospitals want to send patients home as opposed to going to a skilled nursing facility," Gerken says. "[This story] is a prime example that if this patient went home, who knows what the outcome would have been."

Not all heroes wear capes or have superpowers; many wear scrubs and are armed with skills like the Heimlich maneuver. From the whole team at Generations Healthcare, many thanks to Milo Conteras for showing what it truly means to care for a lifetime!