

AirWaves

A Publication of West Michigan Air Care



Spring 2012

www.AirCare.org

Katie's Story

On June 25th, 2011, 16-year-old Katie Henschel left her house intending to drive to a bookstore in Portage before meeting up with family and friends at a graduation party. An unusually enlightened teenager when it comes to phones, Katie texted a friend that she was about to get behind the wheel for a while, signaling her unavailability.

Shortly afterward on a country road, authorities say a deer probably caused Katie's white truck to ram into a tree at 52 mph. Katie has no memory of the accident. A passerby found Katie just after the accident and called for help. Volunteer firefighter Landon Hackenberg, a long-time friend of Katie's brother, was among the first to arrive.

Additional rescue and ambulance personnel from Three Rivers Fire Department and Fabius-Park Fire Department responded to scene and removed Katie from the wreckage, observing her irregular respirations and posturing. She also had significant lower extremity trauma. Katie was given oxygen and was fully immobilized on a long backboard.

Captain Bob VanZalen, EMT-P and Engineer Dave Cramton, EMT-P provided bleeding control for Katie and placed a large-bore IV before the helicopter arrived.

When West Michigan Air Care landed, medical crew Kevin Franklin, RN, EMT-P and Dawn Johnston, RN, NREMT-P off-loaded with rotors

turning and moved to the ambulance that held Katie. At this point Katie was pale and unable to follow commands. Her legs had many lacerations and badly impaired circulation on the left. Katie occasionally moved her arms restlessly and was losing the ability to protect her airway. Three Rivers EMS and Fire personnel assisted with bleeding control measures while



Photo courtesy of TRFD

the Air Care medical crew administered medications sequentially to sedate Katie and prevent increasing pressure in her brain during endotracheal intubation.

Once her breathing tube was in place, the Air Care medical crew administered additional pain control and sedatives that would keep Katie sleeping and comfortable,

Preventing episodes of low blood pressure in head injured patients is essential to optimize return of cognitive function. Likewise, any episode of hypoxia can worsen neurologic outcome, so IV fluids, sedation, and ventilator management were carefully maintained throughout Katie's transport with Air Care.

further controlling the pressure in her brain to prevent damage from swelling. As Katie slept, she was carefully moved across a cornfield and into the helicopter where a ventilator assisted her breathing. Once airborne, Pilot Krystian Zygowiec provided a smooth, nine-minute flight to Bronson. Meanwhile the medical crew started a second IV en route and

administered additional medications to keep Katie sedated. Preventing episodes of low blood pressure in head injured patients is essential to optimize return of cognitive function. Likewise, any episode of hypoxia can worsen neurologic outcome, so IV fluids, sedation, and ventilator management were carefully maintained throughout Katie's transport with Air Care.

At Bronson, Katie's struggle for life continued. Surviving multiple surgeries, she remained unresponsive for 18 days in the Trauma Care Unit. Her family told no one that Katie might not make it. "We didn't want everyone to give up hope," said her mother Lisa.

The day before leaving Bronson for a rehabilitation facility, Lisa recalls stepping out of Katie's room while therapists propped Katie up at the side of the bed with her Dad and grandmother present. Lisa heard a commotion and was called back to the room by the excited staff. Incredibly, Katie had just written her name on a clipboard. It was the start of her journey back.

Months of rehabilitation followed, along with more procedures and sometimes

(continued on page 2)

Air Care Goes Live with Glidescope

As of February 1st, 2012, Air Care began using the Verathon GlideScope® Ranger as the primary method for accomplishing endotracheal intubation in adult patients. As leaders in critical care and emergency transport medicine Air Care medical crews were the first to bring indirect laryngoscopy to the forefront in transport medicine in West Michigan by incorporating the AirTraQ optical device over 2 years ago. The GlideScope® Ranger will expand on this success and promote improvements in airway management while maintaining the high level of ‘first pass’ success that Air Care medical crews exhibit. Air Care’s leadership in airway and ventilator management is just one of the assets that sets Air Care apart from other critical care transport programs regionally and throughout the country.



Air Care’s medical crew attempts intubations from various angles in practice so they can meet unpredictable airway challenges in the field.

Air Care Sponsors The Difficult Airway Course - EMS™



Date: April 16 & 17, 2012

Credits: 15-16*

Location:

Bronson Gilmore Center for Health Education
7 Health Care Plaza
Kalamazoo, MI

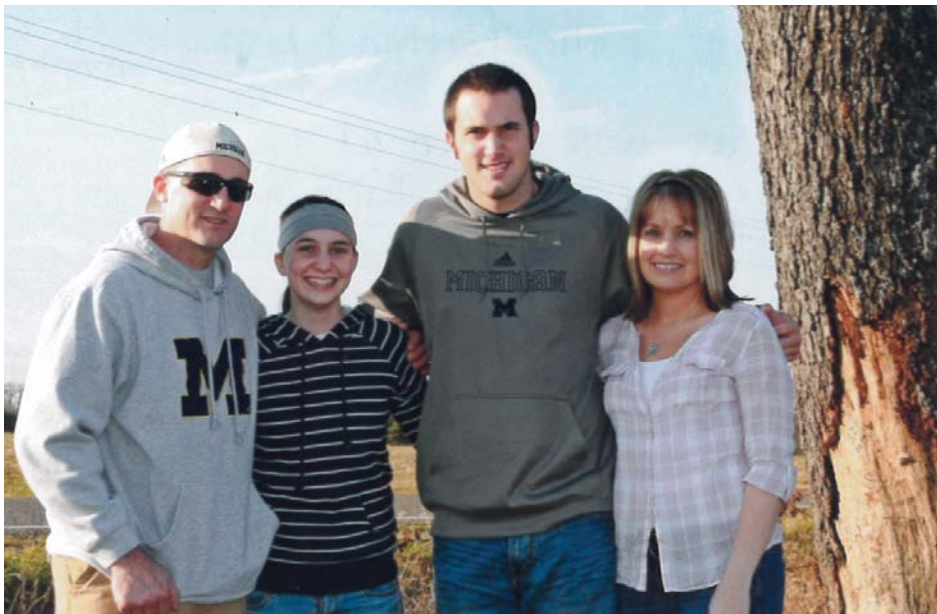
Course fee:

\$350 (includes textbook)

For registration and course information call (269) 329-2040 or visit www.theairwaysite.com

- Learn the full range of airway management techniques including RSI.
- Benefit from the experiences of a truly expert, hands-on faculty.
- Use a myriad of proven airway devices and hone your surgical airways skills.
- Practice decision making and airway techniques in challenging airway stations.
- CECBEMS, ASTNA and AAPA approved.
- Experience the only airway course designed for EMS professionals by the authors of the definitive airway textbook, Manual of Emergency Airway Management—Drs. Ron M. Walls, Michael F. Murphy and Robert C. Lutten. Course participants receive a copy of the manual (a \$67.95 value!)

Katie’s Story (continued from page 1)



Sixteen-year-old Katie (left center) revisits the accident site with her family, where the tree still bears the scars of her accident last June. Left to right: Bill (father), Katie, Nate (brother), and Lisa (mother).

scary complications. Altogether, Katie underwent four brain surgeries and three orthopedic surgeries. Finally, after 99 days of hospitalization, Katie was discharged home on September 30th.

Today Katie is back in school full-time, attends appointments for outpatient rehabilitation, and plans to graduate on time. Although she can’t participate in all the sports she used to, she says it’s a small price to pay, and she is intent

on thanking all who cared for her. Her mother echoes her grateful sentiments.

“I’m in the presence of a miracle every day,” said Katie’s mother Lisa. “I will never have the words to express my gratitude.”



*By Dawn Johnson, CFRN, BSN, NREMT-P
Flight Nurse
West Michigan Air Care*

*“This course was awesome!
I’ve been a paramedic for
10 years and learned more
in 2 days than years of
attending other CE classes.”*

*– Rick Ables, EMT-P,
San Diego, CA*

***CE Credits**

15.5 Contact Hours have been provided by the Air & Surface Transport Nurses Association (Certificate #2009-12). ASTNA is an approved provider for the California Board of Registered Nursing CEP 13575.

Approved by the Continuing Education Coordinating Board for Emergency Medical Services (CECBEMS). CECBEMS Activity #08-CECB-F2-0849. CEH Number and Type: 15.0 Advanced.

This program has been reviewed and is approved for a maximum of 16 hours of AAPA Category 1 CME credit by the Physician Assistant Review Panel.



Our new tail rotor makes us quieter! Air Care's operation includes adherence to many safety requirements including proactively replacing aircraft parts (such as our tail rotor) before they wear out. Our new tail rotor makes the same loud statement in performance, but a softer one in decibels.

What's the Buzz?

You may notice a difference in the sound of West Michigan Air Care's helicopters in the near future. We are in the process of switching to the latest version of tail rotor or "fenestron" as this style is referred to. Air Care has upgraded to the 10-blade "quiet" fenestron from the older 11-blade style.

While "quiet" is a relative term when there is a running helicopter involved, the new 10-blade fenestron provides a significantly reduced noise signature in comparison to the previous 11 blade version, while continuing to provide the same levels of safety and performance. The reduction in noise is due to a change in design of the system with an asymmetrical staggering and resizing of the blades. Gone is the high pitched sound of the tail, replaced with a more tolerable low growl, along with a significant reduction in decibels.

Performing this upgrade when the previous blades were due to be replaced allowed us to accomplish this in a very cost effective manner. In addition, the new version has a 5000-hour life limit for the blades, double the 2500-hour life limit of the previous blades, also contributing to the cost effectiveness. The entire process was performed in house by our maintenance staff and only required two days, start to finish. This upgrade was recently performed on N365WM with sister aircraft N365A scheduled to be upgraded in the fall of this year.

So next time you see us flying over, keep an ear open to see if you can hear the difference. Or hear it less, which is the whole idea.



By John Eichel
Director of Maintenance
West Michigan Air Care

Announcements

New Air Care Board Member



Dr. Scott Davidson, MD, FACS, Trauma Medical Director, Bronson Methodist Hospital, and LT COL USAFR

Air Care is pleased to have Dr. Scott Davidson join our Board of Directors. The medical crew prizes Dr. Davidson's

contribution to the region's trauma system as well as to Air Care educational meetings, so it is with gratitude we acknowledge him for accepting a more active role in Air Care's future.

"I truly enjoy working with the extraordinary team of professionals at WMAC," said Dr. Davidson. "Our community is lucky to have such a talented team available to provide care when needed. I am honored by the invitation to join the WMAC Board and look forward to being a part of this organization."

Tim Lechota awarded the Michelle North Scholarship for Safety

Tim Lechota, A&P Engineer and Safety Manager for West Michigan Aircare, was recently awarded a scholarship by Helicopter Association International. The scholarship provides for the winner to attend the HAI Safety Management course at HELI-EXPO 2012 in Dallas, Texas. It also includes a full registration for the winner and a guest to HELI-EXPO 2012, and dinner for two at the Salute to Excellence Awards dinner, courtesy of Helicopter Association International. Congratulations, Tim!

Dr. Glenn Ekblad Celebrates 15 years as Air Care's Medical Director

Dr. Glenn Ekblad brings an undeniable educational intensity to Air Care's daily operation and is widely recognized as being one of the most involved medical directors of any HEMS agency. Recently he was honored for 15 years of service as Air Care's Medical Director. Thank you Dr. Ekblad, for your service and dedication.

Jan Eichel Becomes Regional Faculty for ACLS and PALS

The American Heart Association's Emergency Cardiovascular Care Committee for Michigan recently confirmed the appointment of Air Care's Director of Clinical Operations, Jan Eichel, to Regional Faculty. Members of regional faculty are appointed volunteer leaders who serve as science and curriculum experts to training centers and instructors. We are proud that Jan was invited to be in this select group.

The Air Care Store is Open!

Air Care shirts, fleece, bags, umbrellas, and more... we've got them and they look sharp. Follow the signs to Air Care in the Gilmore Center during business hours and pick up something nice for yourself.

Landing Zone Classes

We depend on our first responders to help us safely land at scenes, especially at night. Landing zone classes are now being scheduled on a systematic, county-by-county basis. Find out when we'll be in your county—or, put in an early request for what works for your department. Air Care T-shirts provided to all registered participants. Contact Krystian Zygowiec at kazygowiec@aircare.org or call 1-800-922-1234.

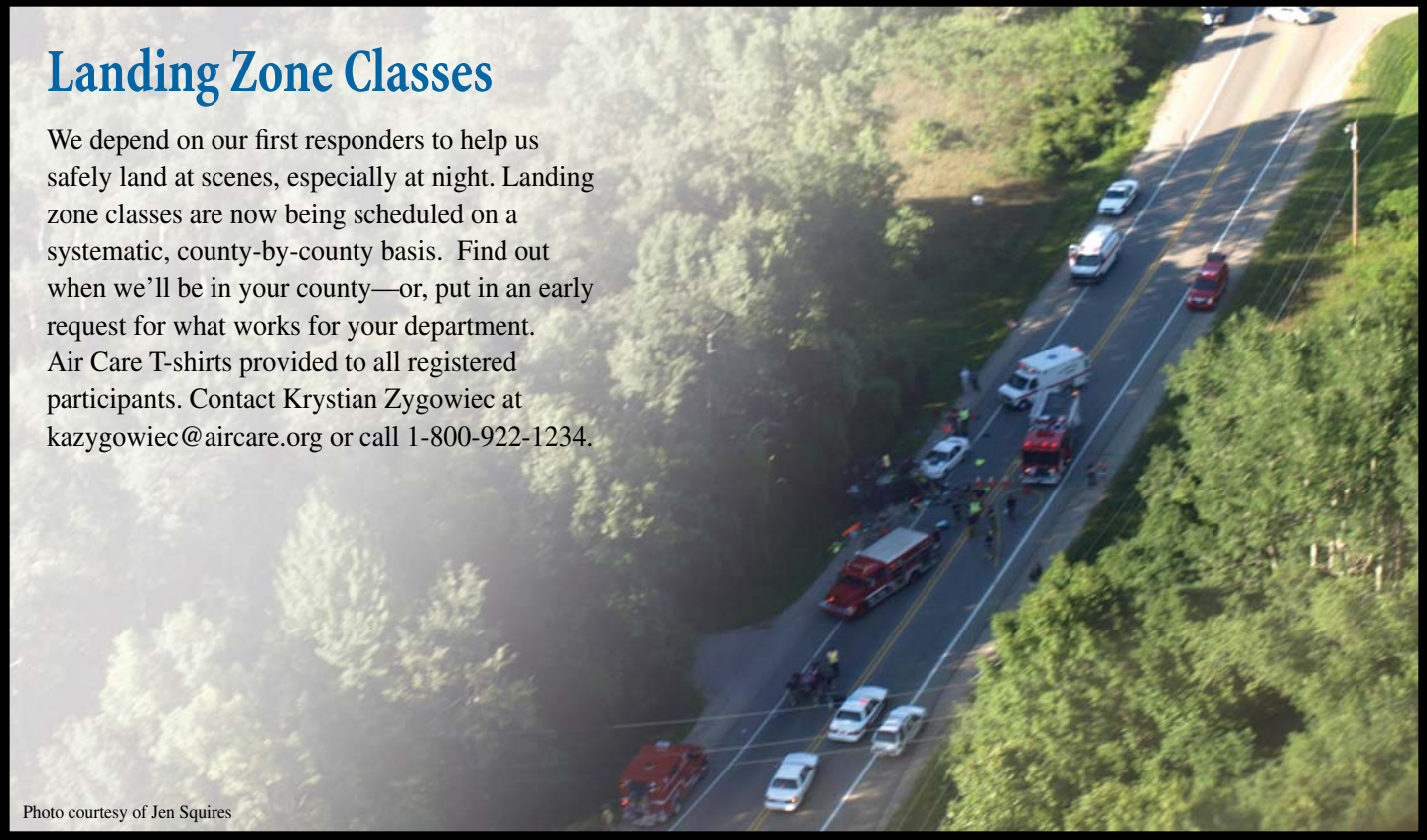


Photo courtesy of Jen Squires



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PO Box 50406
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(269) 337-2505 Phone
(269) 337-2506 Fax

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