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Floyd woman owes life to donated defibrillator

By Dale Moss

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Tana Bolus and Kristy Smith could say we told you so. They do not.

Angela Glotzbach could ask why me, why again? She does not.

What matters, all that matters, is that Glotzbach lives, like a campaign led by Bolus and Smith, to improve the odds for more of us. This is a story about gratitude, not gloating; about high-tech wonders, not wallowing. It involves both determination and, for those who believe, divine guidance.

Bolus' mind is boggled.

"The way everything fell into place, it defies logic," she said.

The short of it: Glotzbach, 37, an active woman who felt fine, was in the bleachers on April 20 in Floyds Knobs watching her 7-year-old son Cory play baseball. Then her heart stopped, without warning or apparent cause.

Along with CPR, a portable defibrillator helped save Glotzbach's life. Bolus and Smith had arranged a donation of the machine that had been at the ballpark a mere week. Also on hand that evening, coincidentally as supportive parents, were emergency room nurse Bolus, an ER doctor and a New Albany police officer.

All sprang into action.

Plus emergency responders happened to be but a few stone throws away, in training.

Glotzbach spent nine days in the hospital and, as a precaution, has had a defibrillator and a pacemaker implanted. She looks good, regains strength, smiles like she won the lottery and made it recently to one of Cory's end-of-the-year school events. (She's also the mother of daughter Maci, 10.)

"I can see change each day," said Debbie Ross, Glotzbach's mother.

The longer of it: Glotzbach knows already way too much about how bumpy life's ride can be.

Long before her heart gave out her hearing did, also seemingly without reason. One ear is all but useless; the other functions decently only because of a cochlear implant, yet another miraculous invention. Glotzbach has more metal in her than do some car bumpers and, she volunteers, she runs on batteries.

"I told her she's going to be the bionic woman before it's over," Ross said.

With the deluxe aid, Glotzbach returned two years ago to teaching preschool, another love. She had to cut this semester short at Christ United Methodist Church in Georgetown, of course. She expects

to be back at it come fall, though. Family and friends call her Angel not only because it is shorter.

"I can't feel sorry for myself," Glotzbach said. "There are people out there worse off. I just feel I'm lucky."

So there we have it -- a terrifying, inexplicable ordeal occurring at the right time, in the right place at least outside of a hospital, to the right victim if anyone qualifies as that.

"It was the best-case scenario, that's for sure," Bolus said. She could tell Glotzbach was tough, a fighter, that night at the game, as her heart was shocked again and again into behaving itself.

Glotzbach is ready, too, to be a grown-up poster child for defibrillators to become as common as fire extinguishers. Representing their sorority, Delta Epsilon, Bolus and Smith continue their quest for money -- the Horseshoe Foundation paid for the device used on Glotzbach and ones on hand at other ballparks in Floyd County.

No doubt about it, Glotzbach's episode helps like little else could to drive home the message. Yet many spots where many people gather probably still go without.

"They should be everywhere," said Keith Glotzbach, Angela's husband.

Bolus and friends took on this cause after a small boy died last year in Louisville after being accidentally struck in the chest with a baseball bat.

"It's a learning curve," Bolus said. "We're on the upstart of the learning curve, as far as educating people."

She also will train more people as she has the coaches in Cory's baseball league. The machines are said to be simple to master.

Bolus and Smith ask donors to send checks made out to Delta Epsilon to 4020 Doe Creek Drive, Floyds Knobs, IN 47119.

Schools are tops now among the women's priorities for defibrillators. Also, a "For Benefit of Angela Glotzbach" fund is set up at Chase Bank, 800 Highlander Point Drive, Floyds Knobs, IN 47119. It helps pay medical costs not covered by Glotzbach's insurance.

Dale Moss' column appears on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Reach him at (812) 949-4026 or dmosse@courier-journal.com. Comment on this column, and read his blog and previous columns, at www.courier-journal.com/moss.
