



American Red Cross
Mile High Region
444 Sherman St, Denver, CO 80203

-- News Release --

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Contact: Deborah Wiig, Communications Specialist, 303-722-7474

Six who saved the life of doctor in fiery crash recognized by American Red Cross

Denver, CO -- When two Colorado State troopers reached a Children's Hospital doctor trapped in his blazing SUV on I-70, they battled to keep the flames from consuming him until an Aurora firefighter could free him from his vehicle. A doctor and nurse at University Hospital, where the man was airlifted, worked to treat burns that penetrated to the bone.

For their heroism in saving the life of Dr. Jason Rhodes, Trooper Randy Orton, Cpl. Tim McClinchy, George Sjaardema, Dr. Gordon Lindberg and Kimberly Lamothe will receive this year's Professional Rescuer Award from the American Red Cross Mile High Chapter at its annual Breakfast of Champions on March 20.

On August 8th, Rhodes, a pediatric orthopedic surgeon, was driving to a meeting on I-70 in Aurora when he was rear-ended by a tractor-trailer. When Trooper Randy Orton and Cpl. Tim McClinchy reached the wreck, they found him wedged inside his 2007 gray Chevrolet Trailblazer, engulfed by six-foot flames. When they couldn't free him, they collected fire extinguishers from semi-trucks lined up along the highway and emptied 20 of them onto flames that licked at the man's body until the Aurora Fire Department arrived. When the fire was under control, firefighter George Sjaardema had to cut away the roof of the car to rescue Rhodes, pulling his legs from beneath the crushed dash to free him.

In the University Hospital burn unit, he was treated by Dr. Gordon Lindberg and nurse Kimberly LaMothe for severe burns that ultimately required three surgeries.

The hospital recently arranged for a reunion between Rhodes and the Colorado State Patrol officers, Aurora firefighters and rural Metro paramedics who participated in the rescue. Rhodes is back at work and expects to be able to perform surgery again.

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