

Picture-perfect response saves a life in Fitchburg

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Kudos to Scott LaPrade, a longtime freelance photographer for the Sentinel & Enterprise, who put his instincts and skills from his full-time job as a Leominster firefighter to good use while on assignment for us Thursday.

LaPrade was at Crocker Field photographing the 103rd running of the Fitchburg Relays, in which students from elementary grades to high school compete, when he heard somebody shout, "He's choking!"

As quick as a shutter click, LaPrade responded, located the distressed boy and performed the Heimlich maneuver. On LaPrade's third try using the procedure, a bottle cap that had been lodged in the boy's windpipe popped from his mouth. The pair exchanged a high-five and a handshake before the paramedics checked out the boy, who was fine. Ironically, another off-duty firefighter who's handy with a camera, Rick Jollimore of the Fitchburg Fire Department, captured photos of the handshake.

In an interview with a Boston TV station Friday, LaPrade scoffed at the suggestion that he was a hero. He instead turned the focus away from him to urge everyone to learn the Heimlich maneuver and CPR.

We appreciate LaPrade's humility, but we know otherwise. His heroic response is worth much more than a thousand words.

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