

# Bellevue couple meets 911 operator who saved husband's life



From left: Dave Woolley-Wilson, Cortney McDaniels, Jessie Woolley-Wilson and dog, Sonny, pose for a photo outside of NORCOM's headquarters

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As Jessie Woolley-Wilson hugged her dog, Sonny, and listened to paramedics repeatedly shock her husband with a defibrillator, she couldn't help but fear her family was about to become a little smaller.

Mere minutes prior, she had heard a loud thud and walked into the next room to see Sonny licking her unconscious husband, Dave Woolley-Wilson, whose face was quickly turning blue.

He wasn't breathing, and when she put her ear to his chest, Jessie couldn't hear a heartbeat.

She grabbed the phone and called 911, where she was connected with new operator and Bothell resident Cortney McDaniel. Although she had started training in October 2015, McDaniel had only been working as a 911 operator at NORCOM for a little more than a week when she got Jessie's call on April 11.

In a flash, the two were working to save Dave's life.

Jessie — the CEO of Bellevue's DreamBox Learning — is used to calling the shots in tough situations, but didn't know how to do CPR. She initially struggled to bite back her fear and the many questions, but McDaniel quickly brought her ease, she said.

"Cortney [McDaniel] completely reassured me. I went to a completely different place," Jessie Woolley-Wilson said.

Over the next four to five minutes, McDaniel helped Jessie keep oxygenated blood flowing through Dave's veins while they waited for the medics to arrive. People performing CPR need to push hard and fast on the victim's chest — a common tip is to push in time with the Bee Gee's song "Stayin' Alive".

Don't be afraid to break his ribs and don't stop until the medics push you out of the way, McDaniel told her. But when they arrived and pushed Jessie out of the way, McDaniel had to hang up and move on to the next call, uncertain of Dave's fate.

"I do remember going back at the end of my shift and seeing if [Dave] went to the hospital or not," she said. The paramedics' records of whether they brought a victim to the hospital or called the morgue are often the only indicators 911 operators have if their patients survived or not.

Across the country, the chances of people surviving cardiac incidents outside of a hospital are low. Less than six percent of people in these situations survive, according to the [Institute of Medicine](#). Comparatively, approximately half of victims of cardiac arrest outside a hospital in NORCOM-served King County survive.

Dave was one of the lucky ones — after being resuscitated, he was transported to Overlake Medical Center where he spent a few days in induced hypothermia before having surgery. On June 4, nearly two months after what he now calls his "resurrection," Dave, Jessie and Sonny met McDaniel for the first time in person.

"How do you thank someone for this? We're indebted to you," Dave said before giving McDaniel a hug at NORCOM's headquarters in Bellevue.

Paramedics credited the fact that Jessie called 911 right away and unlocked the front door of the couple's home with their ability to respond quickly and get Dave's heart beating again. Every second counts in these situations, and if Jessie had to stop CPR to open the door for the paramedics, Dave would have lost precious time.

But Jessie credits McDaniel and her instruction with Dave's recovery. Being able to meet the couple and see Dave's recovery was a special for the young operator, she said.

"There's people who have worked here a lot longer than I have who have never gotten to hear outcomes like this," McDaniel said. "It's a blessing."