

Sister, cousin to the rescue

Written by MARK JAEGER

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<http://www.ozaukeepress.com/images/072513/drowningSM.png>

Quick work by young family members saves Saukville boy, 6, from drowning

It took only a few moments for an idyllic summer day at the pool to turn into a near tragedy for a Saukville family.

Without the fast reactions of 9-year-old Avery Phillips and her 14-year-old cousin Haylie Hansen, 6-year-old Michael Phillips could easily have been a drowning victim.

The life-threatening drama unfolded July 3, when the Phillips family was visiting family in Pewaukee.



“The neighbors were out of town, but said we should feel free to use their in-ground pool. It was just crawling with kids,” said Kelly Phillips, Michael and Avery’s mother.

“I was watching them all having fun, when I stepped away for a minute to go to the bathroom. I asked the older teens to keep an eye on the little ones while I was gone.”

When she returned to the pool, Phillips said, a niece came running up to her, all flustered, saying someone got hurt.

“When I got to the pool, I saw my niece Haylie was doing CPR on someone. As I got closer, I could see it was Michael,” she recalled.

“His face was blue and foam was coming from his mouth.”

While waiting for EMTs to answer the 911 call, Phillips learned it was her daughter who pulled her son out of the pool.

“Avery said she saw someone floating face-down in the pool and called for the big kids to help. When they didn’t do anything, she swam over and somehow managed to pull him out of the water,” Phillips said.

That’s when Haylie stepped in.

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“I am so grateful that she knew what to do. I know that the longer it takes for someone to be revived, the less their chances are for full recovery,” Phillips said.

She said she was told the 14-year-old learned CPR at school.

The boy was taken to a Pewaukee hospital and then transferred to Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin in Wauwatosa.

After a stay in the intensive care unit to monitor Michael’s status, the medical team determined he had suffered no permanent damage from the near-drowning.

The prospect of psychological damage seems to have disappeared, too.

“One of the first things Michael asked when we got home was, ‘Can I go swimming?’ Apparently he’s over it,” Phillips said.

Phillips said she still marvels at the composure her 9-year-old daughter showed during the ordeal.

“She is amazing for a little girl. Avery has always been kind of a tomboy in ribbons, never afraid to bait her own hook or gut a fish,” her mother said.

She said her daughter was perfectly calm in describing the incident and her determination to save her little brother.

Phillips said her son usually stays in the shallow end of any pool and seldom gets in the water without his “floaties.”

On the day of the accident, he was using a kickboard, which got away from him when his swimming goggles got knocked from his face by a jet of water.

Phillips said words can’t describe how grateful she is that the episode had a happy ending and that her daughter and niece were there when they were needed.

“What I learned is that you should think twice before you ask teens with cell phones and whatever to watch out for your kids,” she said.

Avery and Michael Phillips are students at Saukville Elementary School.

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Image Information: NEAR-DROWNING VICTIM Michael Phillips of Saukville was surrounded by his 9-year-old sister Avery (left) and 14-year-old cousin Haylie Hansen while recovering at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin in Wauwatosa.