



Media Release

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON
3400 – 30th Street
Vernon, BC
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Tuesday, January 17, 2012

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Vernon Lifeguard Laura Hitchen Saves Choking Infant

On Tuesday January 3rd at approximately 10:23 a.m., parent Melaney McKay (pronounced Melanie) was in the Vernon Recreation Complex change room and noticed that a quarter was missing from the change room bench and that her child (Blaine McKay - 13 months) was choking.

Melaney immediately left the change room and brought Blaine out onto the deck and told Laura Hitchen, a City of Vernon Lifeguard, what she suspected.

Laura immediately dropped to one knee and began performing the back blow procedure to dislodge the quarter. Laura notified another guard to make a 911 call. Laura did six back blows. Blaine screamed and vomited, but no quarter appeared. Laura repeated the back blows 3 – 4 more times and the baby cried and coughed up the quarter. EMT's arrived shortly afterwards.

Melaney has indicated that she was "very pleased" with Laura's actions. Melaney said, "Laura was very calm" and "acted like it was an everyday thing". Laura's calm demeanor made Melaney "feel calm". Melaney said, "Laura handled it wonderfully".

An anonymous witness of the situation filled out a comment card at the front desk and gave City of Vernon Recreation Complex Staff 5 out of 5 ratings on staff courtesy, facility cleanliness, skill and competence of staff and overall service quality. The anonymous witness wrote: "Witnessed Lifeguard Laura Hitchen save an infant that was choking on a quarter. She was calm and cool and well trained. Good job Laura."

Melaney McKay, baby Blaine McKay, and Laura Hitchen and are available for a photo / video opportunity on:

Date: Thursday, January 19, 2012

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

Location: Pool viewing area, Vernon Recreation Complex: 3310 37th Ave. Vernon