Taking CPR course saves a life

By Gemma McLuckie

Not long ago, Tony Hill spent four minutes saving a life. It made the four hours he spent learning cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) worth it.

Hill, coordinator of telephone inventories, Telephone Services, and Emmett Walden, telephone technician, were leaving their Lincoln Tower office when they heard a young woman calling for help.

She was giving CPR to another woman, who had stopped breathing. The victim was dressed in a suit and jogging shoes, so Hill speculates she had collapsed while exercising during her lunch hour.

After about three minutes of CPR by Hill and Walden, the woman started breathing on her own. The rescuers' relief was short-lived as she stopped breathing a second time. They revived her again just as a University Emergency Medical Services squad arrived.

Hill says the woman, who reportedly had a history of heart disease, was taken to University Hospitals.

Rescuers doing CPR provide artificial circulation and breathing for people whose heart and lungs have stopped functioning. They blow air into the victim's lungs and massage their chests to stimulate heart action.

Hill says he didn't get nervous. "It was automatic, I just did the basic steps we had been taught," he says. He had taken CPR training while in high school and in the Army.

It was the second time Walden had used CPR to save a life. He received his training in a class offered by a former employer.

According to the American Red Cross, most cardiac deaths occur outside the hospital.

Many of the thousands of fatalities each year could have been prevented if basic life support emergency first aid had been given in the first few seconds after cardiac arrest, says Carolyn Hanks, health services director for the Columbus area Red Cross chapter.

In cardiac arrest, the heart stops beating because of heart attack, shock, drowning or other cause. About four minutes after that occurs, brain damage begins, says Patrick Maughan, assistant chief of emergency medical services. After 10 minutes, brain death is almost inevitable.

According to American Heart Association findings, the survival rate of persons who receive CPR immediately after a full cardiac arrest is about 30 percent, Maughan says. The survival rate of people who must wait for emergency medical personnel even for a few minutes is only 8 percent.

CPR-trained rescuers also have saved many people who were in danger because their airways were blocked, Maughan says.

The American Heart Association and the American Red Cross both have set up guidelines for certification in CPR.

Classes are taught at two levels. In basic courses, people learn how to do the technique by themselves on adults. Advanced courses cover how two rescuers work together, how to do CPR on children and infants, and how to treat a person who is choking. Each session is about four hours long.

Training is available in the University area through:

- *Emergency Medical Services/Fire Prevention.* Maughan can set up basic, advanced or combined classes for groups of six-12 people. The sessions, based on American Heart Association guidelines, are free to organizations connected with the University. Call 292-2437 for details.

- *Recreation and Intramural Sports.* If an employee's job requires CPR training, he or she may arrange to attend staff training classes at Larkins Hall. For more information, call 292-7671.

- *University Hospitals.* Courses, based on American Heart Association guidelines, are held monthly for University employees. Certification sessions will be held from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. July 22 and Aug. 19. Hour-long recertification classes begin each hour from 7:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Aug. 4. All sessions are held in M100 Starling-Loving Hall. They are free for hospital employees. Other employees must pay $10 or $15, depending on the class level. To register, call Rosemary McEelligott, patient education and training, at 293-3910.

- *American Red Cross.* The chapter schedules several classes in Franklin County each month. One will be held from 6-10 p.m. Aug. 11 at the University Area Center, 1618 Highland St. There is a fee for materials. Call 253-7981 to register.

Also, the chapter soon will offer evening sessions for the entire University community at Larkins Hall. The dates and times are to be announced. For more information, call 253-7981.