



TEAMSTERS JOINT COUNCIL 25

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NEWS >>

LOCAL 700 MOTOR TRUCK DRIVER HELPS SAVE CIVILIAN FROM SUICIDE ATTEMPT

A few months ago, Chicago Streets and Sanitation Motor Truck Driver Lillian Garcia was going to lunch around 11 a.m. like she usually does. When she parked her truck near the 3200 S. Ashland block, she noticed a woman trying to jump into the middle of the street amid very heavy traffic from both directions.

“I was alone in the truck and saw this woman who looked very distraught and was attempting to run into traffic,” said Lillian. “I immediately got out of the truck and ran over to her. She was shaking. I asked her, ‘what are you doing?’”

It was only when Lillian spoke to the woman in Spanish that she responded. “She was a Hispanic woman, probably around 45-years-old,” said Lillian. “I stretched out my hand to her and said ‘let me talk to you.’”

While Lillian, a member of Teamsters Local 700, was talking to the woman and attempting to calm her down, another woman, named Marie, who is part of the city Laborer’s union, was also trying to help after she saw the woman from the other side of the street.

The distressed woman slipped out of Lillian’s hand and again attempted to run into the oncoming traffic. Lillian, wearing her bright yellow city shirt, walked out into the street and stopped traffic while Marie grabbed hold of the woman and brought her back to the sidewalk.

“Luckily, the public knows us city workers by our yellow shirts, so we are actually able to stop traffic when we need to,” said Lillian. “We called out to the other civilians around us to call 911 and finally the fire department and an ambulance came. There were a lot of people that saw what we were doing and wanted to help.”

Finally, the woman was with the care of the paramedics and had told them she wanted to talk to God. They discovered she lived right on the corner of the intersection when a neighbor came out and told them she had recently spent time in a mental institution.

“I would have done this for anyone,” said Lillian. “I like helping people and I did not want to see this woman get hurt or possibly kill herself. It was the right thing to do.”

Before working at the South Iron yard, Lillian became a certified paramedic technician in 2011 and had previously worked for the University of Chicago Hospital ER. Lillian has a background in nutritional science and hopes to one day get her master’s degree in the same program.

“My passion is to help people,” said Lillian.

September is Suicide Prevention Month

September is also known as National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month which helps promote resources and awareness around the issues of suicide prevention, how you can help others and how to talk about suicide without increasing the risk of



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harm. Suicidal thoughts can affect anyone regardless of age, gender or background. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people and is often the result of mental health conditions that effect people when they are most vulnerable.

If you or someone you know is in an emergency, call The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or call 911 immediately to be connected to a skilled, trained counselor at a crisis center in your area, anytime 24/7.

Teamsters Local 700 is an affiliate of Teamsters Joint Council 25, America's premier labor union for Chicago, Illinois and northwest Indiana.