

# ORPCA Spring Clean Members Save a Life

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PHOTOS PROVIDED FROM MATRIX

The annual Spring Clean at Matrix Integrated started off like so many in the past: a sunny Saturday off Macadam Avenue, over forty Porsches parked on the street just below I-5, and members drifting between cars, coffee in hand, swapping stories and detailing tips. Somewhere between admiring paint correction and looking for rock chips, you are reminded that our club is as much about people and community as it is about cars.

At 10:37 am, we heard it first—a deep metallic crash, like a freight train trying to rip itself loose from a dead stop. It took only a couple of seconds to realize the sound had come from above us on I-5, where two semis had collided in a way that instantly felt serious. When I looked up, the lead semi-truck was still moving as it pulled toward the

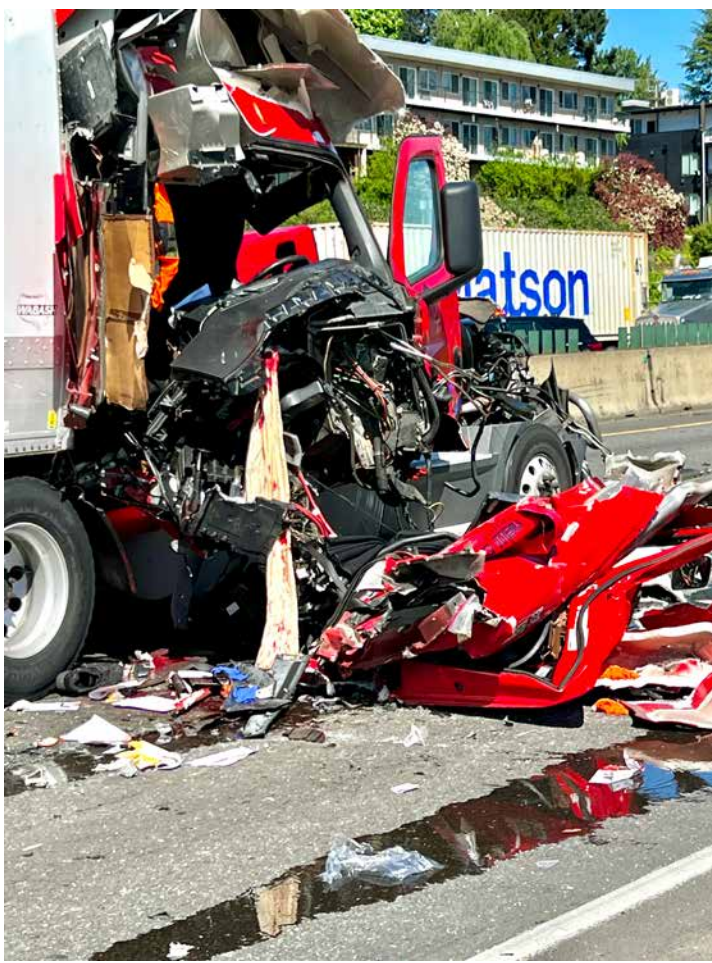
shoulder. Then I saw that it had been rear-ended by another semi, and that the red cab of that trailing tractor had been completely torn apart.

Just as I reached for my phone, Jeremy Williams, club member and Matrix co-owner, had already called 911 and was heading quickly up the hill toward the crash. Jeremy, who is a member of the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office Search-and-Rescue (SAR) unit, was immediately joined by club member Mike Branam, who also has first-aid training from decades as a local

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high school swim coach. In an instant, most of our attention had shifted from the Spring Clean to the scene unfolding above us on the freeway.

A few moments later, Jeremy called down asking for nitrile gloves and trash bags; the 911 dispatcher having prompted the bag request for a reason you will understand below. Brittany, club member and Matrix employee, grabbed a box of gloves as well as bags and ran them up the hill, where she remained for the duration.

From below, we could not see exactly what was happening, but it seemed to be nearly twenty minutes before first responders arrived—or second responders, in this case.

As we learned later from Mike, the red truck cab had been sheared off its body mounts, pushed ~10 feet rearward into its trailer and twisted 90 degrees sideways, the entire passenger side of the truck's cab now shredded apart. The passenger was nearly falling out of the cab, his hand and forearm from just below his elbow had nearly been completely severed, and he was bleeding heavily. Mike first supported the passenger from below the truck cab, and Jeremy assisted Mike in support. They both quickly assessed the situation, noting the man's severe injury. Falling back on his SAR training (which ironically consisted of a first aid and tourniquet review at a SAR monthly meeting just two nights earlier!), Jeremy first used his belt as a tourniquet, but since it was a elastic fabric, he quickly found it wouldn't be tight enough. He called out to the driver of a fifth-wheel rig who was stopped behind the semi, asking for rope, twine, a leather belt, anything that could be used as a tourniquet. Miraculously the driver had a well-equipped first-aid kit that included a packaged tourniquet, which Jeremy then applied successfully as Mike continued to support the passenger. Jeremy grabbed one of the white trash bags (to be used to "gather" the man's severe injury), wrote 10:46 on it with his pen, and tied it to the tourniquet.

Mike and Jeremy continued to support the passenger from falling out of the cab, consoling him and letting him know that EMS was on their way and they were with him until then. Two fire engines, an ambulance and a host of police vehicles started arriving around 10:50. Mike and Jeremy were soon engulfed by Portland Fire crews with backboards, Holmatro cutters and spreaders and rams, and all sorts of other specialized rescue equipment. The man's legs were still trapped in the cab, so it took another 10 minutes to extricate him onto the backboard and AMR gurney. From Mike's account, it sounds very likely that he, Jeremy and Brittany saved the driver's life from bleeding out due to his drastic injury.

Mike, Jeremy and Brittany stayed at the scene well after the ambulance left, speaking with local law enforcement to give witness statements. The couple in the fifth-wheel stayed as well; they had the entire incident on their dash cam.

Mike's police interview finished first and he started heading back down the offramp to Matrix. I knew it was all over when I saw Jeremy and Brittany embrace due to the heaviness of the scene, then start their walk back down to Matrix together. What had started as another enjoyable Spring Clean had turned, in a matter of minutes, into a reminder that the people in this club and around this community are capable of extraordinary things when it matters most.

For me this reinforced the need to be prepared when you least expect it. That includes some level of first-aid training and having a good first-aid kit. I have never purchased one with a tourniquet because I figured I'd never need it, but I also never thought about a scenario where my first-aid kit could save the life of someone else.

I could not be prouder to belong to a Club that counts as its members people like Mike, Jeremy and Brittany. ■

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