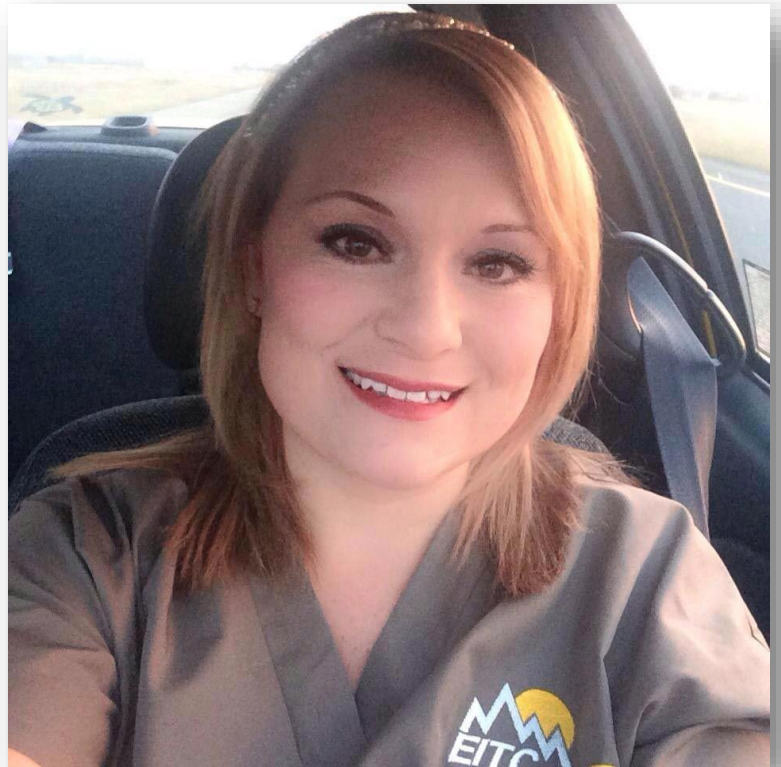


Nurse stopped to help trucker after crash Tuesday

- [Lisa Dayley Smith lsmith@uvsj.com](mailto:Lisa.Dayley.Smith@uvsj.com)
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Licensed Practical Nurse Jennifer Zeh, of St. Anthony, tended to an injured trucker, after he rolled his potato truck on Tuesday in Thornton. Zeh says she was glad to help and that it was just the right thing to do. Here she's shown headed to her nursing studies in Idaho Falls.



http://www.rexburgstandardjournal.com/news/local/nurse-stopped-to-help-trucker-after-crash-tuesday/article_4a803b3c-2546-11e7-8cf1-7733237faaf5.html

THORNTON — A licensed practical nurse driving down Highway 20 found her medical skills come in handy as she tended to an injured trucker whose semi rolled on Tuesday.

As St. Anthony's **Jennifer Zeh** headed to registered nursing classes at the Idaho Falls-based **Eastern Idaho Technical College**, she witnessed cars suddenly braking and potatoes launching skyward. As the dust settled, Zeh saw a semi turned on its side and thousands of spuds strewn across the highway and the adjoining median.

Witnesses reported that a white car cut in front of the semi, causing the driver to lose control of his rig and to tip over, spilling up to 40,000 pounds of potatoes. Neither the trucker's name nor his condition have been released.

After leaving her car, Zeh ran to the overturned semi, where several motorists had also stopped to help. She asked the bewildered crowd if anyone needed a nurse, and they immediately agreed the trucker inside the cab did.

After ensuring that somebody called 911, and after asking everyone to stay calm, Zeh climbed inside the truck's cab, walking through its decimated windshield.

“The windshield wasn't there. I don't even remember there being glass. It was like a doorway. Where I'm really short, it wasn't hard,” she recalled.

Inside the cab, Zeh found a very dazed man in his '60s with blood coming from his mouth. She quickly determined the trucker had bitten his tongue during the crash. Zeh checked his vitals and looked for any sign of internal injuries.

The man was awake and calling his employer.

“I said, ‘Let's not worry about your boss right now. Let's try and stay calm,’” she said.

About 10 minutes later, paramedics arrived. The medics cut off the top of the cab and lifted the trucker out. Zeh got back in her car and drove to Idaho Falls for her class.

It wasn't until Tuesday night that Zeh realized her assistance had been reported on the Standard Journal's webpage. In the article, the paper asked the then-unnamed nurse, who had helped the injured trucker, to contact a reporter. Zeh's friends and family left messages on her cellphone throughout the day telling her that the paper wanted to talk to her.

“I just didn't check my cellphone during the day at school. I was told, ‘The newspaper is trying to get ahold of you,’ I got tons of calls late last night,” she recalled.

Zeh earned her LPN license in May of 2016. While studying for her RN degree, Zeh also serves throughout the Upper Valley as a pediatric nurse. There she works with children reliant on ventilators and tracheostomy tubes.

Zeh's mother had been a nurse, and, after nurses helped successfully treat Zeh's mom for cancer, Zeh opted to become one as well.

"Her nurses were so comforting. I thought, 'I want to be like them,'" she said.

At the age of 35, Zeh went back to school to become an LPN and to later study for her RN degree. Zeh's mother often noted her daughter's uncanny ability to stay calm when everyone else was panicking.

"She said, 'You're just a calming force when there's an emergency.' It's not like I do it on purpose. (At the crash site) I said, 'We need to breathe and work through this. We need to be calm, and later we can have a breakdown,'" she said.

After the paramedics arrived, Zeh headed to class. She called her husband, Matthew, and told him what happened. Zeh later told her fellow classmates, and she says talking about the crash helped her calm down.

Zeh said she stopped to help because it was the right thing to do. She urged travelers to pay more attention while driving past truckers who can't stop quickly.

"Don't cut them off. Be more considerate and cautious," she said.

Zeh pointed out the other travelers who stopped to help the man and insisted that she did nothing heroic. She was thankful for her medical skills in helping the trucker, and says she likes nursing because of the ability it gives her to render aid.

"How can you not want to stop and help someone?" she said.