

No sooner had Brian walked in the door had he uttered to no one in particular, “I don’t feel good. I can’t see.” That’s when his eyes rolled in the back of his head he hit the floor. One parent called 911, as a guest — a retired nurse — sprang into action and immediately began CPR. When the paramedics came they took over and continued the procedure.

All in all, Brian received 93 minutes of CPR.

Having received a call from another parent, mom Becky, who was unaware of the seriousness of what was occurring, thought that Brian might be having a reaction to a new allergy medicine that he was prescribed. But it wasn’t until she arrived that she knew she was mistaken. “I saw the crowd and saw the EMTs on top of him, performing CPR frantically. Time just stopped... in my mind was complete terror. I never expected to see what I saw,” Becky remembers.

Becky and Brian Sr. followed the paramedics to Christiana Hospital where in the ER, doctors were working feverishly to resuscitate him. Then the unthinkable was uttered by one of the doctors and Becky took that statement to mean that her son was not going to make it. But in that instant, the medical team saw a heartbeat. They stabilized Brian and moved him to the ICU

They used a cooling blanket for 24 hrs to lower his temperature, but he was still in a medically induced coma to allow his heart to regain strength. Brian was transferred to CHOP in case a heart transplant was needed. While there, they also performed a CAT scan. “That was really scary. He had over 90 minutes of CPR so we were prepared for the fact that he would have limited or no brain activity,” said Becky. “When they said he didn’t have a stroke or any sign of trauma, that was a very positive sign. Then they said they would refrain from any more medicine to allow him to wake up on his own. That’s when we started to feel an upswing. But we wouldn’t know until he woke up how his brain activity would be.”

Seven days later, on Mother’s Day, Brian opened his eyes. “The greatest Mother’s Day present ever.” He even managed to make her laugh.

All along, every doctor that came in couldn’t believe that he had over 90 minutes of CPR and they all said that that very first act of CPR, delivered by a bystander, is what kept him going. Becky says, “He was never without oxygen. Without Betsy initially doing CPR, I’m certain that he would not have made it. Betsy is Brian’s guardian angel.”

And that’s why Becky and family are part of the Wilmington 2012 Heart Ball. Now, more than ever, she realizes the importance of funding the Heart Association’s research that serves to constantly improve and update lifesaving techniques like CPR. Join Becky, Brian and family on Saturday, March 3rd at the Chase Center on the Riverfront.

