

## Local physician's assistant talks girl off bridge

A mundane trip to the store in Castle Rock turned into something much greater when Udo Foreman PA-C, M.M., a physician's assistant at Parke Health Center in Burlington, spotted a girl sitting on a train bridge over a busy road near his home.

"It was approximately 3:30 p.m. March 4, my son's birthday, when I was going to the store to pick up some things for my wife," recalled Foreman, who has also worked on call at Kit Carson County Memorial Hospital since April 2013.

"I was leaving my community, which is near a busy four-lane road that goes underneath a train bridge.

"When I was driving along, I saw a girl sitting on the train bridge over the road.

"At first I thought it was a teenager wanting alone time and just sitting there.

"I thought it was a little strange, but I kept driving and as I passed under, I noticed her hands were over her face and she was crying.

"Immediately, that struck a big red flag for me.

"Being in emergency medicine you think about things like that; especially with teenage suicide so high."

Immediately after seeing her, Foreman put on his brakes and pulled over on the sidewalk at the bridge and called 911 while he was getting out of his car.

"I let them know there was a teenager on the bridge, but they quickly said they had plenty of calls on this, thanked me and hung up," Foreman indicated.

"At that point, I walked up onto the bridge.

"The girl had gone from sitting behind the railing to climbing over the rail and holding on with one hand, and sometimes two, facing the bridge."

Foreman estimated the bridge was 70 to 80 feet above the road, which is high enough to have caused immediate death had she fallen.

"I stopped right there because I didn't want to put her into any more jeopardy by rushing at her," Foreman described.



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“I did what you are supposed to do in these situations.

“I communicated my name and said I was a physician’s assistant and worked in the emergency room.

“Then I asked her for her name.

“When I asked, she just turned to look at me and then turned away.

“I still didn’t move any further. I didn’t want to put her in any more danger.

“By this time, people were standing under the bridge, and hundreds of cars were backed up in both directions.

“I still stood there and again asked for her name.

“After she told me, I asked if I could get closer to talk to her, and she said ‘yes’.

“I took advantage of that time to get closer to her and saw she was still crying.

“When I was closer, I told her I was sorry she was sad and asked if I could help her with anything.

“She nodded her head yes.”

Foreman had a feeling jumping may not have been the girl’s full intention; but since she was only hanging on with one hand, she was in a situation where one slip of her fingers could cause her to fall.

“I eased closer and started talking to her, telling her how sorry I was she was so sad and asking if she wanted some help,” added Foreman.

“As I said that, I quickly reached and grabbed her around her waist.

“At that point, she started to cry again, and I reassured her I would help her.

“I was alone up there with her, and several people were watching from below.

“I asked a gentleman to come up and help me, since there was no way I was going to let go of her to have her climb over herself. That would have been another dangerous situation.

“We needed to bring the girl back through the railing of the train bridge and onto the bridge itself.

“I never let go of her.

“We pulled her through the gap in the railings back onto the bridge and walked her down to the waiting EMS crews, fire department and police department.”

Foreman gave the police officers his contact information and confirmed with them the girl needed to be taken to the emergency room for an evaluation.

“I haven’t seen or heard from her since the incident,” Foreman noted.

At the time, Foreman didn’t think the rescue was too big a deal.

“I work in an ER, and I see massive trauma regularly, and sometimes situations don’t turn out the best.

“But when I look back at that day, I don’t think anything has affected me quite like that.

“It was a completely different situation; a more emotional situation.

“If I hadn’t been there, I don’t know what would have or could have happened.

“Maybe she would have come to grips and tried to crawl back through.

“I am not sure if that would have happened, or happened safely.

“But, I was there, and I had to do what I had to do,” concluded Foreman.

Foreman’s career in the emergency room began in 1994, when he started out as an emergency medical technician.