

Bus driver honoured for rescue

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Nikola Stojanovic says it was an act of the heart that came over him when he stopped

the bus he was driving to help a man escape his burning car.

"I just saw a man struggling and I needed to get out of the vehicle and try to help him. Sometimes you don't think with the mind, you think with your heart," said the 38-year-old Mississauga man, a Go Transit bus driver who, on Sept. 22, was on his route from Toronto to Hamilton via the QEW during rush hour when he saw the terrifying scene unfold in the middle lane just before Park Lawn Rd.

Stojanovic stopped the bus, grabbed the on-board fire extinguisher and rushed to help the man get into his wheelchair. He then pushed the man to safety by the side of the highway and returned to the burning car

to try extinguish the flames. Realizing the fire was about to get out of hand, he backed away. Moments later, the car exploded.

For his efforts, Stojanovic received The Canadian Red Cross' Rescuer Award Friday in front of his colleagues at GO Transit's Streetsville facility on Mississauga Rd.

It's presented to a non-professional rescuer or off-duty first responder who has volunteered to save a life or has prevented further injury and/or provided comfort to the injured.

Canadian Red Cross regional manager Janelle Warren said it's people like Stojanovic who make a difference.

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"We realize that it's amazing anytime someone stops to do something to help and we're exceptionally impressed and proud of your efforts," she said to Stojanovic before presenting him with the award.

"We want to be sure that it's recognized and (not only) congratulate you on a job well done, but to encourage others to take first aid or CPR training (and to not) be afraid to stop and help."

Greg Percy, GO Transit vice-president of operations, said Stojanovic stepped up when it mattered.

"My belief is that there are watchers and doers, and I'm a big believer in

doing," he said. "I'm really proud to be associated with someone like Nik, who didn't think about it, he didn't analyze the situation, he just jumped in and looked after it."

When Stojanovic returned to his bus after helping the motorist, he received a standing ovation from passengers.

He said he was simply doing what's right.

"Imagine if it was somebody's parent or somebody's brother or sister in that situation," Stojanovic said, adding he hopes someone would do the same for him if he was in similar trouble.

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