



## Letter of Award Lifesaving Medal



To: Officer Keith Gonsalves  
From: Craig N. Meidl, Chief of Police  
Date: August 8, 2018  
Re: Lifesaving Award

Officer Gonsalves,

Sergeant Ernie Wuthrich recently nominated you for the Spokane Police Department's Lifesaving Award. The Lifesaving Award is given to department personnel who, by their immediate actions, have saved a human life under unusual and/or extraordinary circumstances. When the Special Awards Committee reviewed your nomination, it was clear that you are most deserving of this recognition.

Sgt. Wuthrich noted in his nomination, the following:

"On April 13, 2017, Officer Gonsalves responded with multiple officers to Main and Lincoln to check on the welfare of a young woman who was telling her friends that she wanted to commit suicide by jumping into the Spokane River. Officer Gonsalves was the first officer on scene. Witnesses told him that the young woman running west on Main was suicidal. Officer Gonsalves drove down the street to prevent the young woman from running in the roadway. The young woman jumped over the guard rail into the pitch-dark embankment on the north side of Main and screamed that she was going to "die and jump in the river". The woman began sliding down the steep embankment toward the raging and frigid Spokane River. Officer Gonsalves immediately pursued the woman down the embankment, grabbed her right arm, and grabbed onto a tree branch which prevented the two of them from sliding over the edge of a cliff that was only a few feet away. Awaiting beyond the cliff was a 20 foot drop into the river.

Officers Valencia and McVay worked their way down the embankment and assisted Officer Gonsalves with restraining the young woman while waiting for members of the Spokane Fire Department to remove her from the embankment that was covered with underbrush and fallen trees. It took nearly 45 minutes for the Fire Department personnel to cut a path through branches and underbrush so they could use ropes to lower a stretcher down to the officers for the suicidal woman.

Officer Gonsalves' selfless actions kept the young woman from plunging into the river where she most likely would have died due to the frigid temperatures, swift current, and her extremely intoxicated state."

Officer Gonsalves, the Lifesaving Medal is being awarded to you for your heroic actions in the incident outlined above. You will be awarded the Lifesaving Medal during the 2018 Annual Employee Awards Ceremony in March 2019 and a copy of this letter will be placed in your personnel file.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Meidl".

Craig Meidl  
Chief of Police