

GOOSE CREEK

CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



Richard Reynolds, Goose Creek CISD employee, accepts a rod and reel as a gift from Anthony Price, Goose Creek CISD deputy superintendent.

GCCISD employee rescues family

When Captain Richard Reynolds took his jon boat out that Sunday to do a little fishing, he never thought he would be called upon to singlehandedly rescue a family, endangering his own life and possessions in the process – but when he saw the situation, he knew what he had to do.

Reynolds, athletics groundsman for Goose Creek Memorial High School, has been a fisherman and a shrimper for years. Spotting an overturned boat on Cedar Bayou in the area known as Devil's Elbow and six people struggling to hold on to the sides of it, he immediately told them to listen to him and to stay calm.

"I've been around the water all my life, so I knew I could help them," he said. "I said, 'If you do what I say, we're going home,'"

He pulled the three children into his boat first. He then pulled an older man and a second man in, leaving a third man still in the water. Afraid that his own boat would sink, he asked the third man to hang on to the side of the boat.

"I told him not to get into the boat, but to hold on to the side so I could get them to shore," said Reynolds. "Then I noticed that the older man in the boat had stopped breathing, so I turned him over, pounded his back, and he started to breathe again. The man told me he was having a hard time breathing, and I knew he had water in his lungs."

Reynolds had already called for help and was trying to get

"I told him to put his arms around my neck and to not let go," said Reynolds. "I told the rest of the family to hang on to the sides of the boat. I swam out to get my gas tank and the life jackets, one at a time, with the boy around my neck."

Realizing that the older man had died and that he was floating away, he swam to retrieve him, finding a piece of string and tying it around his leg. He managed to get the deceased man and the boy, who was still clinging to his neck, to shore. The other family members were holding on to the part of the boat that was still floating and to the gas tank and life jackets.

At one point, another boat came upon the scene, but the occupants told Reynolds they did not want to get involved, something that Reynolds just couldn't understand.

Finally, Reynolds saw that the Coast Guard had arrived. Everyone was transported except Reynolds, who was left to figure out how to help himself, since he had launched his boat from his home and did not have his vehicle. Thanks to some other boaters, he was given a ride home so that he could return to get his boat. When he returned, the Coast Guard had tied his boat off for him, so he was able to get it on his trailer to take it home to start working on the motor.

His boat motor was ruined, and he had lost everything on it – his wallet, his cell phone, and his fishing reels and equipment, but he said if the same thing happened the next day and he knew he would lose everything again, he

everyone to Roseland Park. He saw that the man had stopped breathing again. The man's son, who was the man still in the water, panicked and tried to get in the boat to help his father.

"I told him not to, but you know how that is. He wanted to help him," said Reynolds.

The extra weight caused Reynolds' boat to sink, and everyone, including Reynolds, who was the only one wearing a life jacket, fell into the water. Some quick decisions had to be made, since Reynolds knew the family could not swim and had no life jackets. He saw his three extra life jackets floating away, but the quick-thinking fisherman knew that he could handle the situation.

First, he grabbed one of the boys, who looked to Reynolds to be about 5 years old.

would still do same thing. In fact, he says it was fate that caused him to come upon the accident that day. He usually takes another route when he fishes.

"Fate – God's will – that's what brought us together that day," said Reynolds. "Faith – what you believe in – that's what brought us home."

Reynolds' advice to anyone on a boat is to wear a life jacket.

"If you have a life jacket on, this is just an adventure," said Reynolds.

Goose Creek CISD is proud of employee Richard Reynolds, whose selfless acts of courage saved the lives of five members of a family. And although he does not think he did anything out of the ordinary, he is a true hero in anyone's eyes.

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