



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

Sen. Fred Akshar Honors Local Sheriff Deputies, Police and Support Staff for Saving Officer's Life

FRED AKSHAR October 22, 2020

| ISSUE: **CELEBRATING COMMUNITY HEROES**



(BINGHAMTON, NY) Senator Akshar was joined by Binghamton Mayor Rich David and officials from the Binghamton Police Department and the Sheriff's Offices from both Broome and Tioga Counties to recognize four individuals for their quick action in saving the life of a fellow law enforcement officer last year.

Detective J. Matthew Barcak, and civilian Erika Harder of Broome County Sheriff's Office, Deputy David Schoonover of the Tioga County Sheriff's Office and Sergeant Dennis Pavelski

of the Binghamton Police Department (BPD) were instrumental in saving the life of BPD officer Brad Kaczynski on September 9, 2019.

That day, Barcak, Schoonover and Pavelski were working as instructors on the property of the old Binghamton Psychiatric Hospital for the Officer Survival portion of the Zone 6 Police Academy recruit training. As the instructors were finishing the day's training and preparing for the following day, B.P.D Officer Brad Kaczynski began to exhibit signs of a medical emergency, including light-headedness and disorientation.

Detective Barcak immediately called 911, and instructed Broome County Sherriff's office civilian employee, Erika Harder, to search Kaczynski's car for evidence of a pre-existing medical condition. Shortly thereafter, Officer Kaczynski's breath became shallow and he lost consciousness. Fortunately, Kaczynski briefly regained consciousness long enough to mumble the words "bee sting" before appearing to go into shock.

The instructors leapt into action and quickly loaded Officer Kaczynski into Detective Barcak's vehicle and swiftly drove him down the hill to the to meet with emergency medical personnel, but during the short drive, Kaczynski stopped breathing.

Upon reaching the bottom of the hill, Detective Barcak provided rescue breaths and CPR until emergency medical personnel arrived. Officer Kaczynski remained hospitalized and in serious condition for several days before eventually turning the corner and making a full recovery.

"If it hadn't been for the quick thinking and astute actions of Detective Barcak, Deputy Schoonover, Sergeant Pavelski and Ms. Harder, Officer Kaczynski might not be here today," said Senator Fred Akshar. "They displayed courage and calm under pressure, and were

instrumental in saving a young officer's life. On behalf of the 52nd Senate District, I couldn't be prouder to have individuals of their caliber keeping our communities safe, and on behalf of Officer Kaczynski's family and friends, I say thank you."

"I know you would have done this for anyone, but I'm so fortunate that you were there for me that day," said Officer Brad Kaczynski during the ceremony. "There's no doubt in my mind that I wouldn't be here today if it weren't for the four of you. On behalf of my wife and my three children, thank you for everything you've done for us, not just on that day but in the weeks and months that followed."

Earlier this year, Senator Akshar authored and passed a Senate Resolution ([J.3181](#)) honoring Detective Barcak, Deputy Schoonover, Sergeant Pavelski and Ms. Harder. Today, he presented them each with framed copies of the resolution and the New York State Liberty Award Medal, the highest honor bestowed by the New York State Senate.