



From left: Board Chairman Hal Bernson, CEO Roger Snoble, BDOF Bus Operator trainee Tamara Houston, Deputy CEO John Catoe, Metro Bus Operator Sara Bernal and General Manager Tracy Daly.

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Operator and Trainee Prevent Passenger's Massive Blood Loss

By LISA HUYNH

(July 25, 2002) Metro Bus Operator Sara Bernal and BDOF Bus Operator trainee Tamara Houston may have saved an elderly woman's life, Tuesday afternoon, while driving Line 180 in Glendale. On Thursday, the MTA Board commended the women for their actions.

As the bus was on route, Houston noticed a large pool of blood on the floor. She realized that passenger Lois Tolrdge, 79, was bleeding. Tolrdge was unaware that a varicose vein in her lower right leg had burst.

When Houston calmly informed Bernal that the passenger needed immediate medical attention, Bernal pulled her bus to a secure area and called Bus Operation Control Center for help.

As Houston ran to a near-by restaurant for paper towels, Bernal asked her other passengers to move to the rear of the bus to give Tolrdge air and space.

With Tolrdge's leg continuing to spurt blood, Bernal tore off her uniform shirt and wrapped it around the passenger's leg to stop the bleeding. Bernal also elevated the woman's leg to help reduce the blood loss.

Gushing like a faucet

"Blood was gushing out like a faucet," says Bernal, who is assigned to North Los Angeles Division 3. "I was shocked at the moment, but I had to stay calm for her and to clearly communicate with BOCC."

When Houston returned to the bus with paper towels, Bernal radioed for a back-up bus for the other passengers.

The paramedics and the fire department arrived and transported Tolrdge to Verdugo Hills Hospital, where she was treated and released later that evening. Tolrdge is reportedly doing well.

Meanwhile, the passengers boarded the back-up bus and continued to their destinations with Houston as bus operator.

"I am extremely proud of Operator Bernal and her student Houston. They showed initiative and were proactive," says Division Transportation Manager Dan Frawley. "They are well deserving of being commended for their heroism."

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