



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Sundial Beach Resort Bartender Comes To the Rescue ... Twice!**

**Sanibel Island, FL – June 24, 2013** -- On June 11, a group of ladies was having lunch at the Sea Breeze Café at the Sundial Beach & Spa Resort on Sanibel Island. Bartender Mike Velardi, age 24, was in the server station and another server was on the patio with a customer. Mike heard loud screams coming from the dining room and immediately ran back to see what was happening.

Upon his return, he found an elderly lady who showed signs of choking with her hands flailing around her neck, unable to speak. Everyone else was watching and not attempting to help. Mike immediately assessed the situation, took charge and assumed the execution of the Heimlich maneuver. Luckily, after about six thrusts around her stomach area, Sylvia Longaker, a dining guest, expelled the food. But she wasn't out of the woods yet.

Explains Mike, "She was pale, lethargic and had blue lips, so I started lifting her up so she would not pass out. Clearly, she was tired after her ordeal and in pain. I was not sure how long she had gone without oxygen while she was choking. But by the time the EMS people arrived, she was breathing on her own."

The Heimlich maneuver is an emergency technique for preventing suffocation when a person's airway (windpipe) becomes blocked by a piece of food or other object.

After being treated by a doctor, she learned that she had experienced some internal bruising around her ribs, but this was much better than what might have happened had Mike not been on the scene.

But our story does not end here ... with one very happy customer. Let's go for two, Mike! About two weeks earlier, an older gentleman was also dining in Sea Breeze and started to slowly pass out, as if he were sleeping. He became delirious and seemed to be experiencing a loss of memory. No one seemed to know what to do. Fortunately, Mike was on duty at the time, dashed to the scene and made sure the gentleman had an open airway. He conducted an initial assessment of his condition, checked the guest's vital signs and called 911. Like the first story, this one also had a happy ending.

Mike Velardi has been a bartender at Sundial's restaurants for over three years and is well respected by his peers and supervisors. But what many of them did not know is that Mike has always had an interest in medicine and took EMT courses while attending Edison State College. He even completed over 300 hours of "ride time" with emergency responder vehicles while in college.

So why did Mike select hospitality over medicine for his career? He explains, "I've always loved medicine, but I also love Sanibel and enjoy being a bartender at Sundial. It's fun to talk to guests who come here from all over the world for their vacation. Plus I get to see the Gulf and the beach from my spot behind the bar and I love to work here. Lucky me. "

No, Mike, lucky us!

Sundial Beach Resort & Spa GM Bob Kramm recently sent Mike an official resort commendation for his valiant care-giving moves, "Your response exemplifies the standard of excellence and professionalism we hold in high esteem at the resort. We are proud to have you on the team and congratulate you for your training and quick response!" Way to go, Mike!

**PHOTO ID: Mike Velardi preparing cocktail; Mike and Sundial GM Bob Kramm**

