



## SOUTH AFRICA

### Dramatic rescue saves boy, 8

2007-3-19 09:38

Pretoria - An eight-year-old boy was stuck for nearly two hours underwater after his arm became stuck in a swimming pool.

He survived because a man continued to give him mouth-to-mouth resuscitation under water.

Halaletsang Nkome, 8, became stuck after his right arm was sucked in up to the armpit in a waterpipe of the municipal swimming pool in Danville in the western parts of Pretoria on Sunday.

The drama started shortly after 15:00 and continued until about 17:00.

During the first half hour Hansie Diffenthal, 21, from Elandspoort kept resuscitating the boy underwater. Diffenthal worked as a lifesaver at this pool until a year ago.

#### **Tried to empty pool**

Meanwhile, children, parents and residents tried to empty the pool with buckets, containers and dustbins to get the boy's head above water.

"I just heard a woman scream 'go, Hansie!' and I jumped into the pool.

"Under the water I saw the boy's arm was stuck in the pump (pipe)," said Diffenthal.

"I pulled hard to get him out, but it didn't help and I could see he was hurt. I started giving him mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

"I had to keep going down to give him air, then go up to get more air, and then down again to give it to him. I don't know for how long or how many times I went up and down."

According to Diffenthal the boy was hysterical in the beginning, but when he realised that he could breathe, he started calming down.

He said when he noticed the child spitting blood and vomiting, he suggested that somebody cut a 2 litre bottle open at the top and bottom to keep the water away from the child's mouth and nose.

#### **Mom in shock**

"We also put my sister's 10-month-old baby's cream and oil on the boy's arm in an effort to get it out, but it didn't help."

Meanwhile, Janine Nawrattel, 28, van Elandspoort and her husband Bennie jumped into their car and drove to the Philip Nel fire station to seek help.

The 10111 number apparently gave an engaged signal.

"When we got there, I just shouted 'please come quickly, the child is drowning!'.

"I ran inside dressed in my swimsuit. The ambulance followed us to the pool. It took us a good 10 minutes to the fire station and back."

Meanwhile somebody had also called the ER24 emergency service. Paul van der Merwe, an ER24 paramedic, said they received the call about 15:20. The two ambulances arrived almost simultaneously.

"When we arrived about 5 minutes later, we put a pipe that we usually put in people's lungs to help them breathe, into his mouth. We then stabilised him and switched off the pool's pump.

"His head was underwater almost all of the time and up to a little while before he was saved," said Van der Merwe.

Willie Dry from Tshwane emergency services said they pumped 40 000 litres out of the pool to get the boy's head above water.

"We also used a hammer to make a hole of about 60cm outside the pool in an effort to push his arm back from the other side. We then put machine oil into the hole to move his arm and get it out.

Ben Havenga, Diffenthal's stepfather, said people shouted and applauded when the boy was lifted from the water.

"People shouted 'thank you very much!'."

Adelaide Nkome, the boy's mother, stood watching in shock while everybody tried to save her son. "He's going to make it," she said from Kalafong Hospital on Sunday evening.

She said doctors managed to stabilise him after his lungs had collapsed.

**Beeld**