

Mother of 3 saved from heroin overdose

By Rich Newberg, News 4 Senior Correspondent Published: April 10, 2015, 7:08 pm Updated: April 10, 2015, 8:08 pm

CHEETOWAGA, N.Y. (WIVB) — A Cheektowaga mother of three young children went into the bathroom last month and gave herself a shot of heroin.

She previously was going into withdrawal and didn't want the children and their grandmother to see her in that state.

"I just wanted to feel better so I could hang out with my family," she said "It took a really bad turn."

She came within minutes of dying of an overdose.

"I apparently fell off the toilet. My mother had to break down the bathroom door and I woke up to paramedics and EMT's everywhere," she said.

Her mother found her unconscious and called for help.

Cheektowaga Police Sgt. John Wanat's patrol officers responded and administered Narcan, the drug that reverses the effects of heroin.

"We were fortunate enough to save her life," he said. "She left with the paramedics and hopefully she's on her way to getting some treatment and some help for herself."

When she regained consciousness, the young mother said he recalled the officer who saved her saying telling her she wouldn't have lasted one or two more minutes.

"I would have been gone," she said. "I would have been dead."

Cheektowaga Police Chief David Zack had attended a national conference in 2014 and learned that many suburban communities were experiencing a spike in heroin overdoses. He decided to take a proactive approach for his own police force. There were only one or two overdoses a month at the time.

In March, his officers responded to twelve drug overdose calls. All the victims were saved, ten with the use of Narcan.

"We're seeing officers responding quickly and they're out there saving lives, and that's the business we're in," he said.

Thursday night Cheektowaga police officer Tony Nazzarett saved a heroin user who had lost consciousness in a car.

"It's a real good feeling when you see his eyes opening and he starts to talk eventually and starts to become coherent," said Nazzarett. "You know he's going to make it."

The mother of three who now has a second chance at life says she is extremely grateful to the officer who saved her life. She says she has been clean for three weeks following her overdose.

She says she lost many friends to overdoses and has even used Narcan on others to bring them back to life.

Now she faces another major crisis in her road to recovery.

She says there are no local treatment centers than accept her. She says all the beds are taken, so she is left fighting her addiction with the help of family and friends.