

## Aid Station Put to the Test

An aid station was set up this Oktoberfest weekend on 3rd and Pearl streets in La Crosse.

The station was designed to be an area of assistance for people needing medical attention, directions, a charge for their cell phone battery, or a safe ride home.

It's the first time a center like this has ever been available in midst of all the Oktoberfest action.

The aid station was designed to help people like Chris Stich's friend.

Chris Stich says, "[He] came downtown all day yesterday, got a little bit too intoxicated, and he got separated from a group. He's from Stout, had no idea where he was going. He came here, paramedics called him a free cab, and he got to my house. He was just torn up, good thing it was down here."

Chris's friend wasn't the only person who sought help on Saturday.

More than 50 people came to the aid station.

Aid station volunteer Erik Kahl says, "Coming in for anything as simple as Band-Aids, to people coming in with actual cuts, glass on their feet, a lot of people came in here to charge phones."

Erik Kahl was in charge of getting students from UW-L to volunteer at the station.

But they weren't the only ones who helped out.

Kahl says, "Everyone from Tri-State Ambulance, to the La Crosse fire department, police department."

It's that collaborative effort that made a difference here for people needing assistance at the First Aid station.

Erik Kahl says he hopes another place will be set up next year to help people.

Kahl says, "I hope we can do something next year. People defiantly utilized it. I think if we do it again next year it will be more popular."

Stich says he could have lost his friend had it not been for the aid station.

Stich says, "I think it's a good idea, defiantly helps out if people know there is somewhere to come."

No one will ever know if the first Aid station on 3rd and Pearl was truly responsible for saving any lives.

But, it did get many people home.

The aid station a helped a combined 85 people this weekend. It was organized in just two weeks.



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