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## **Mejatto boy saves baby from choking**

Quick action by an 11-year-old boy scout on Mejatto Island in Kwajalein saved the life of a three-year-old boy who was choking on a piece of food.

Late last month about eight in the evening first class scout Rico Anjain was at home getting dressed after his shower when his younger brother Riesen and relatives rushed over from next door with the choking baby seeking help from Rico's father Jorju Anjain.

According to Vili Kuilamu, scout master and eighth grade teacher at Mejatto Elementary School, Rico noticed that the family was panicking around the baby and his dad was tapping the baby on the back.

A quick assessment and realization of the situation at hand prompted Rico to immediately step in and grab the baby from his father. He then proceeded to preform the heimlich Maneuver on the baby.

Rico sat the baby on his leg and, facing the baby upwards, he tilted the baby back toward the ground on an angle and applied a two finger press in the mid-lower chest region.

As the family looked on, Rico applied three presses into the baby's chest immediately dislodging the piece of food from the baby's throat and saving his life.

Rico, who joined the Boy Scouts of Mejatto last year, learned how to preform the Heimlich Maneuver five months ago during their first aid training course for their first

aid merit badge.

The course was conducted by Dr. Pikash Gupta, a Nepalese doctor with the 177 Health Care program. Gupta trained the boy scouts to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and how to treat fractures, burns, drowning, choking and wound dressing.

The Boy Scouts of Mejjatto have been very active since their inception.

“We have a scout meeting every Monday,” said Kuilamu. “We set up four groups of patrol groups and I give them problems to solve based on what they’ve learned. We do this sort of practice to refresh what they learn and to reinforce team work.”

In the islands, the young are usually not noticed for being “capable” by elders. The perception is that “you’re too young to understand or know.”

Rico’s action however has changed some of the thinking at Mejjatto on the ability of “kids.”

“One of the councilmen came to me and told me that he couldn’t believe that a small kid like Rico could understand and practice what he learned,” said Kuilamu.

“From Rico’s lifesaving action, I’ve noticed a real change in the community. The Rongelap local government has always been a strong supporter of the program, now it seems that the community is also more supportive.”

Kuilamu praised the efforts of RALgov and Robert Nakagawa, of the Aloha Council Boy Scouts based in Honolulu, bringing the organization to Mejjatto.

“I am uplifted by Rico’s actions,” said Kuilamu. “It is a real encouragement.”

According to Nakagawa, Rico’s actions will be submitted to the Boy Scouts of America for approval of a heroism medal for saving another persons life.

Nakagawa just returned from Mejjatto and is in Majuro this week with the Boy Scouts of Majuro for the annual summer camp on Enemanit Island. The troops left from the Uliga dock on Wednesday afternoon and will returning on Saturday.