

# Tamaqua boy rescued from mine

## His injuries extensive after fall of 100 feet

A MedEvac rescue helicopter was used last night to evacuate a seriously injured Tamaqua youth to the Allentown and Sacred Heart Hospital Center (ASH) after he had fallen 100 feet into an abandoned strip mine south of the borough.

Mark Rudenko, 15, of 166 Orwigsburg St. is in serious condition

in the ASH Shock Trauma Unit with head injuries, a collapsed left lung, a broken clavicle and possible internal injuries, a hospital spokesman said.

Rudenko, son of Mr. and Mrs. Russel Rudenko, was found at the bottom of the strip mine at about 6 p.m. by Jack Brode, a neighbor, who had been walking his dog along the mountainous ridge that overlooks Tamaqua Area High School.

"I heard a cracking, something like a firecracker or a .22-caliber rifle, and I looked down into the stripping hole," explained Brode, a welding instructor at Dana Corp., Reading.

"At first, it looked like a dummy

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## RESCUE

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lying there, but then I heard him yelling for help," Brode said.

Brode asked the disabled youth if he was injured.

"I'm hurt, I'm hurt," the boy called.

The 50-year-old Tamaqua man ran about a quarter mile to his home and called the Tamaqua police, who later arrived with the Tamaqua Rescue Squad.

"I was very, very upset. I knew I had to get help . . . I hoped he could hold on until it got there," Brode recalled.

Michael Lincovich, a rescue squad official, said it took about a half hour to retrieve the youth from the rocky pit — which one observer described as "straight up and down."

The youth was brought to the surface shortly after 7 p.m. — about an hour after he had been found. It is not known how long the boy had been there.

About five rescue workers descended into the pit and, with the aid of others on top, used ropes to pull the injured boy out in a rescue basket.

Lincovich said the decision to call in the MedEvac helicopter was made when rescue personnel had assessed the youth's condition.

The incident happened a week after an ASH MedEvac I helicopter crashed, killing all four people

aboard, in the New Ringgold area — about 10 miles southwest of Tamaqua.

Dr. Michael Rhodes, director of the ASH trauma unit, said the helicopter used yesterday was a MedEvac II — a less sophisticated version not equipped for night flights.

It was the third life flight since the crash.

Dr. Rhodes said the decision to activate the life flight was based on the boy's condition, which he described as a "Class 1" patient.

Tamaqua police said it is not known what the boy was doing near the strip mine, which is about a quarter mile south of his home.

Brode said it is believed he may have been taking pictures, but no camera was found at the scene.

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