

# Ricky Itta said 'Outstanding' employee

By Deanne Nelson  
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From the Bering Straights

Richard K. Itta, a 38-year old deaf postal clerk employed at the Barrow Post Office for the past 11 months, is an outstanding employee. Aside from his regular duties, he is always

willing to help others by carrying parcels to their homes after work and has on numerous occasions paid for, or helped to pay for C.O.D.'s nearing the time to be returned.

Ricky is the son of Noah and Mollie Itta of Barrow, which is the most northern city in the United States. He has been deaf since the age of 4, and received his education at

Vancouver School for the Deaf; Vancouver, Washington. He is an ex-Olympic runner; competing at Helsinki, Finland during his senior year in the Olympics for the Deaf.

On May 9, 1980, Ricky's heroic actions saved the life of a 9-year old Barrow youth. At approximately 7:30 that evening, while  
Continued on Page 9 -

# ● ITTA SAVES BOY'S LIFE

Continued from Page 3 -

watching T.V., Ricky noticed three young boys outside his second story window, walking on a 20 foot snowdrift.

He watched as one of the youths, Sunny Tuckfield, chipped away at the top of the drift with his heel. The top of the drift, which Sunny had been workin on, broke loose and fell to the ground. Sunny lost his balance and slid down the drift behind the large hard-packed chunk of snow. Ricky continued to watch as another lad preceded to do the same thing. Sunny was watching from below as a huge chunk came down and landed on top of him.

The boy who had caused the chunk to fall did not move, his face was frozen in panic.

He had just buried his friend under a chunk of snow about two feet thick, five feet long and three feet wide. When Ricky saw the horrified look on the boy's face, he jumped up and ran to the window. Sunny was completely hidden by the snow packed on top of him. Ricky stepped into his pac boots and ran out of his apartment - down the stairs and into the

back of the 29 unit apartment building, where he lives, into the 10 degree weather.

By this time the other two boys had gotten to the bottom of the drift and were trying desperately to reach their friend. The snow was so hard packed and frozen that their attempts were useless. Ricky stuck his bare hands down to get a grip on the snow and tried to lift it off Sunny.

The chunk of snow did not move. Ricky knew he would have to use all the strength he possessed or the boy would be smothered in seconds.

He spread his feet, and took a deep breath, reached down again with his bare hands and took hold of the chunk of snow. At first the chunk would not move, then suddenly Ricky felt a snap as the chunk gave loose and slowly he lifted it from the still frame of the boy. Sunny did not move.

Ricky reached down and brushed the snow off the boy's face and lifted him from the hole

in which he had been buried. Slowly Sunny opened his eyes, and giving a little gasp, began to sob quietly. Thank God, Sunny was still alive, and he was unharmed except for a bruised thigh.

About an hour later Ricky went down to Sunny's apartment to see how he was feeling. After Sunny's father, Owen Tuckfield, shook his hand, the boy looked up into his eyes and said thank you. Although Ricky could not hear the words; he knew from the look on the boy's face that he was very thankful. This heroic action will be remembered by Sunny Tuckfield for a long time.

On July 14, Ricky became Officer-in-Charge at the Barrow Office, and will serve in that capacity for the next three months during the absence of Deanne Nelson, Barrow Postmaster, who is temporarily reassigned to the Nome office as Officer-in-Charge. He will be receiving an outstanding achievement award from the U.S. Postal Service and will be nominated as Outstanding Handicapped Postal Employee for 1981.