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After robbery and beating, an act of kindness

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By [CHRISTINE S. MOYER](#) cmoyer@scn1.com

AURORA -- The owner of a Downer Place business who was beaten and robbed last weekend greeted Aurora firefighters standing outside his store Tuesday.

"Hi, guys," he said, flashing a grin.

The business owner has known most of the men since they were boys. He shook their hands, limping slightly from one man to the next. His right arm, wrapped up to the elbow in a gauze bandage, hung at his side.

The owner is not being identified because he is the victim of a crime. At 3:15 p.m. Saturday, a man and a woman forced their way into his downtown store and beat the owner, Aurora police said. They then stole cash from the register and the owner's pockets.

Police were pursuing leads Tuesday. Anyone with information should call investigators at 630-801-6655 or Crime Stoppers at 630-892-1000. Callers are anonymous and qualify for a cash reward of up to \$5,000.

In the beating, the store owner suffered a broken rib and extensive bruising on his left arm. His right arm still won't stop bleeding.

But on Tuesday morning, he didn't want to talk about that with the firefighters.

The owner stood outside with the men for a couple minutes before turning around and walking back into the store. A few firefighters looked at each other.

"I wonder if he knows why we're here," one of the men said.

The firefighters filed into the business, crowding around the owner near the front door. Lt. Dan Osman handed the man a sealed white envelope.

"Oh, is it a sympathy card?" the owner said.

Then Osman showed the man the wad of cash bound by a rubber band. The store owner swatted at the air with his hand.

"I don't want no collection," he said.

"Oh, come on," the owner sighed as Osman tossed the money raised by the firefighters onto the counter.

"We're going to give this to some charity," the store owner said.

That's fine with the firefighters, who decided to raise money after learning about the owner's injuries.

The firefighters chatted for a few minutes until it was apparent the owner wanted to get back to work.

"OK, guys," he said. "Protect the city."

A few firefighters gingerly hugged the man before leaving.

"God bless you guys," the owner said as the firefighters walked away.