

## Whistler teachers undergo CPR training

Portable defibrillators, training coming to Sea to Sky district high schools

JUNE 28, 2012

DAVID BURKE [DBURKE@SQUAMISHCHIEF.COM](mailto:DBURKE@SQUAMISHCHIEF.COM)

For the past few years, high school teachers and students in the Sea to Sky corridor have benefited from training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) techniques, giving the ability to help save a life if someone around them suffers cardiac arrest.

On Tuesday (June 26), nine corridor teachers continued that practice by undergoing training in the life-saving techniques, with a new component — the ability to use an automated external defibrillator (AED) to shock a victim's

heart back to life, should that be necessary.

It's all part of a program brought together by ACT Foundation, a national charitable group that works to establish CPR and AED programs in Canadian high schools. While the ACT (advanced coronary treatment) Foundation operates thanks to ongoing funding from the likes of AstraZenica, Pfizer and Sanofi, other corporate sponsors often step up to fund the equipment and training needed to get new initiatives off the ground.

In this case, the RBC Foundation provided \$14,000 to pay for portable defibrillator units to be placed in public secondary schools beginning this fall, along with the training for teachers.

Since its inception, the aim of the program is for all Grade 10 students in the district to be trained in CPR. The teachers from Howe Sound, Whistler and Pemberton secondary schools who underwent the training in Squamish this week plan to pass on the training to their students this fall.

Two teachers from Whistler Secondary School (WSS) were trained this week, and they're expected to pass on the knowledge to 90 local Grade 10 students. WSS will also receive four AED training mannequins, four AED training units and one AED.

B.J. Chute, chief of the B.C. Ambulance Service station in Squamish, said teachers in the Sea to Sky District are the first in B.C. to receive the AED training.

"The research is showing that if the person starts CPR right away, then can administer the defibrillator, it increases the survivability by 75 per cent," Sandra Clarke, ACT Foundation executive director, said on Monday (June 25).

"A couple years ago we gave each school a set of mannequins, so the teachers take ownership of the program and they train all Grade 10 students. Our goal is to ensure that every young person graduates from high school knowing how to save a life, and we're now adding the defibrillator skills."

ACT Foundation officials believe that with high schools increasingly serving as community centres that host not only sporting events but theatre performances, public meetings and the like, it makes sense to train those who



Sea to Sky School District teachers take part in a CPR training exercise provided by B.C. Ambulance personnel on behalf of the ACT Foundation on Tuesday (June 26) at House Sound Secondary School in Squamish.

are likely to be present when an emergency happens to know proper CPR techniques. Actions taken in the first few moments after a cardiac arrest — often before a paramedic arrives — often mean the difference between life and death, Clarke said.

In the past few months, at least two people who suffered heart attacks while attending sporting events at schools in Toronto survived their ordeals thanks to the training provided through ACT, she said.

“As we see the defibrillators more and more present in arenas, in schools and other public places, people can act on the spot, and consequently it gives us the ability to save more lives,” Clarke said.