



Grade 10 teacher Phil Hiscock practices CPR on a training mannequin.

IMAGE: ERICA FISHER

## Training teachers to save lives

Several School District 60 high school teachers from both Fort St. John and Hudson's Hope were the ones learning today, as they were taught how to perform CPR and use an Automated External Defibrillator. As part of the ACT High School CPR Program, they are also learning how to pass that information on and teach their own students these lifesaving skills.

Jeff Kain, CPR Instructor and Trainer, says the ultimate intention is to improve survivability from sudden cardiac arrest in our community.



"We have a captive audience, we've got a large number of people that are already good at teaching and instructing, and with access to that many people, fresh young minds will be able to go out into the community and hopefully if they ever encounter somebody suffering cardiac arrest they'll be able to help."

In the gym of North Peace Secondary School, the teachers practiced scenarios in which they found someone lying on the floor in a public place, and had to practice what they would do next. An AED is being installed in both North Peace Secondary School and Hudson's Hope Elementary/Secondary, which Kain says could be instrumental in saving someone's life.

"Public access defibrillation programs are putting AEDs in places where there's large volumes of people that might suffer cardiac arrest, and the importance of having them out there for the public is that the sooner a person is defibrillated, the more likely they will survive."

Phil Hiscock, a teacher at the Energetic Learning Campus, believes the more people with this knowledge, the better, especially with the ELC being in a public facility.

"It's good for those kids to know, because they might be walking around at lunch time one day and see an elderly person or someone who's been walking on the track, so I think the chance of those students having to deal with something like this is probably higher than it is at the high school."

He completed another ACT program five years ago and taught it to his grade 10 class then, and he says that while the students tend to take the training seriously, it also helps to make it fun.

"There are times when they joke around a little bit, but to keep it colloquial like that, it does make it a little more fun for them also, and the more elaborate you can make your scenarios, the more fun they tend to have with it."

Today's training, the installation of the AEDs and the funding for training mannequins and AED units all comes from Global Medical Services, with the help of partnerships that include the Emergency and Health Services Commission and B.C. Ambulance Service, along with private health partners. 350 local students are expected to learn CPR and AED skills this year.

**Erica Fisher**

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