

A lesson in lifesaving

Nov 12, 2015



Nicole Milne, 15, says she was excited to learn new lifesaving skills at Sands Secondary on Monday. Nicole wants to be an anesthesiologist.
— *Image Credit: Tom Zytaruk*

DELTA — There's no doubt there are more than a few public school teachers out there who complain that their students will one day drive them to heart failure.

But then again, if they teach in Delta, a student just might end up saving their life. Same goes for parents, and pretty much everyone else in the community.

This week a national charitable organization – the Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation – along with BC Emergency Health Services and the BC Ambulance Service, launched a CPR and defibrillator training program at seven public

secondary schools in the municipality that aims to train 1,500 students with these lifesaving skills every year.

Grade 10 students will receive training, during gym classes, at Burnsvew, Delta, Delview, North Delta, Seaquam, South Delta and Sands Secondary school, which hosted the launch.

“It’s a perfect opportunity for both staff and students to receive training and ultimately we’re looking forward to saving lives in the process,” said Aaron Akune, Sands’ principal.

Teacher Kevan Gaull’s Grade 10 PE leadership students demonstrated their newly learned lifesaving skills inside the school’s gymnasium Monday following a ceremony attended by Delta Mayor Lois Jackson, Delta MLAs Scott Hamilton (Delta North), Vicky Huntington (Delta South) and other local dignitaries.

Gaull told the Now that the Grade 10 teachers were trained last June and that it “feels pretty good” to pass these skills on to his students.

“I know we’ve got a few teachers who have heart conditions already,” he noted. “So as I talk to the kids you never know what’s going to happen or who it’s going to happen to. The more people we can get trained, and the more people who are ready to help out, the better it is for the whole community.”

Twenty eight defibrillator training mannequins, 28 defibrillator training units and five automated external defibrillators (AEDs) have been donated, to be set up in handy locations at participating schools. (The school district bought the other two).

Nicole Milne, 15, was one of the students demonstrating her new skills.

“It is kind of intense,” she said, “but it’s a good skill to have in case something like that happens, someone had a heart attack, and then you are able to save them, or hopefully help save them until the first responders come.”

She said she wants to be an anesthesiologist.

“I do want to go into the medical field. We practiced it a little bit so we know how to work the defibrillator and other than that, this is the first real practice round. It’s pretty exciting.”

Katie McDougall, 15, “saved” her dummy, too.

It was “a bit stressful. I think it’s real helpful because it teaches us how to save someone. If I didn’t know how to do this and someone in my house is having a heart attack or something I wouldn’t know what to do.

“And now I do,” she said.

So far the ACT Foundation, a charitable organization, has set up the CPR program in more than 1,700 secondary schools across Canada.

Nationally, 2.9 million students have already received CPR training with more than 6,200 teachers training 320,000 students every year. In B.C., some 281,000 students have been trained in the CPR program in 226 schools to date. More than 1,200 teachers trained as CPR and AED instructors share their skills with 44,000 students each year.

Sandra Clarke, executive director of the ACT Foundation of Canada said her organization is “thrilled” the program is supported by the Royal Bank of Canada, BCEHS, AstraZeneca Canada, Pfizer Canada, Sanofi Canada, Ausenco, Triwest Mechanical Ltd., Unitech Construction Management Ltd. and Westshore Terminals.

“These are lifesaving skills that students will be able to bring to their current and future families and communities,” Clarke noted.

Delta Mayor Lois Jackson, whose grandson attended Sands, reminded the students that they can find defibrillators at local recreation centres.

“This is an amazing opportunity that the Delta School District has offered to us,” she said, “and I applaud the ACT Foundation for its highly commended program.

“It buys critical time allowing first responders to arrive.”

Just last week, she said, members of the public using a public AED helped a person in North Delta who had a heart attack.

“By the time our first responder firefighters had arrived, the patient was breathing again. The beauty of CPR is that it is not a complicated process and can be learned by all of us.

“Maybe you can save the life of a family member,” Jackson said. “It is better to have this and pray that we never have to use it than to be unprepared at the most critical time in someone’s life.”

Doug Sheppard, assistant superintendent of Delta school district, said, “Our students and our community are healthier and safer as a result of this program.

“Personally, I’m extremely grateful for this.”

See more at:

<http://www.thenownewspaper.com/community/346962662.html#.VKT4nc0gEv8.facebook>