

Thompson Citizen

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June 15, 2016 12:00 AM



R. D. Parker Collegiate students demonstrate emergency CPR and AED (automated external defibrillator) skills June 3 using the mannequins and machines donated to the school through the ACT Foundation. Photograph By Kacper Antoszewski

For the second year running, the Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation has partnered with northern schools to provide cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillator AED training to Grade 9 phys ed students, and on June 3 R. D. Parker Collegiate opened its doors to thank the foundation with a demonstration of the studentss newfound skills.

RDPC vice-principal Kelly Scallion thanked the ACT Foundation for the donation: “Living in the north has many benefits, but it also has many challenges: often we find ourselves in very remote areas, with no cell service or immediate access to emergency services. These lifesaving skills introduced in Grade 9 can make all the difference.”

The ACT Foundation works with international and local sponsors to bring first aid training and equipment to high schools across Canada: In Northern Manitoba, ACT provided staff training, training AED units, and CPR dummies to RDPC last years and this year Nelson House’s Nisichawayasihk Neyo Ohtinwak Collegiate and Wabowden’s Mel Johnson School also received the same training and support.

“This is the first time we’re in Northern Manitoba,” said operations manager Jennifer Edwards, representing the ACT Foundation at the demonstration. Joining Edwards were a variety of community

representatives, including Mystery Lake School District superintendent Lorie Henderson, Stacey Martin, assistant to Thompson MLA Kelly Bindle, and Dr. Adam Amadu, medical director of the Thompson General Hospital's emergency department.

Edwards also acknowledged Vale Manitoba Operations as a leading community partner, while deputy chief of Thompson Fire and Emergency Services Rick Morris presented vice-president of Manitoba Operations Mark Scott with a certificate of appreciation. "As a supervisor at Vale, I've received CPR and first aid training a number of times," Scott noted, "and I've been witness to events over the last couple of years where, just as Rick said, the early intervention and the application of that training is responsible for the fact that friends of mine are still with us."

"Have fun with it," he said, "and take it seriously at the same time. At some point, it may well come in handy."

Natalie Tays, principal of Nisichawayasihk Neyo Ohtinwak Collegiate, pointed out that the program fills a critical component of the school's unique land-based educational programming, which involves considerable time in the wilderness. But even at home and in the classroom, Tays notes that isolated community may benefit greatly from wider education in first aid: "The additional support to our remote location, with limited resources, will be able to give our students marketable skills," she said, "and help increase the sense of the community by giving back."

Edwards also presented RDPC phys ed teacher Tairra Warren with ACT's Community Champion Award, for her efforts in working with Edwards and ACT in implementing a program suitable for the school. "This program wouldn't exist if we didn't have teachers who were dedicated to ensuring that students had the skills and knowledge," Edwards stressed. "She's been a giant in helping this program started here."

Edwards also recognized RDPC's Grade 10 first aid class for providing a semester-long course enhancing student's knowledge and certifications in emergency procedures. She noted that teachers have reported that the basic training in phys ed class has sometimes sparked a student's interest in furthering their emergency skills.

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