

Renfrew school to receive CPR and defibrillator training every year

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St. Joseph's Catholic High School in Renfrew had teachers Ryan McIntyre, Mark Valliquette, Stacey McGregor and Meghan Cahill receive training to be CPR, AED and First Aid instructors with the plan to ensure that all Grade 9 students receive training. - Jessica Pender/Submitted

Training students to save lives just got a big boost at Bishop Smith Catholic High School and St. Joseph's Catholic High School from the Advanced Coronary Treatment Foundation.

Both schools are receiving the needed training equipment to enable teachers to train students in how to use an automated external defibrillator, otherwise known as an AED.

The AED is a small, easy-to-use device (with voice prompts) that can tell when a heart stops beating effectively and delivers an electric shock to restart the heart. With many community centers, arenas and other sports facilities and public places now having AEDs, the importance of people knowing how to use them is high.

About 40,000 Canadians suffer cardiac arrest each year. This represents one cardiac arrest every 12 minutes, every day of the year. It can happen to anyone, anywhere, at any age.

Early CPR combined with early defibrillation can increase survival rates for cardiac arrest victims by up to 75 per cent according to the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

“Easy-to-use defibrillators are appearing in many public places. The schools already teach young people to act, to start CPR. Now we want them to grab the defibrillator on the wall and use that, too. These schools are teaching life skills that save lives,” says Dr. Justin Maloney, medical director, ACT Foundation.

The two high schools are receiving the needed CPR/AED training mannequins, AED training units, and curriculum materials to enable the teachers to train the students thanks to the ACT Foundation and health partners AstraZeneca Canada, Sanofi Canada, Amgen Canada, and provincial partners, the Government of Ontario and Hydro One.

This initiative will see more than 270 students from the communities of Pembroke and Renfrew empowered by their teachers with essential life-saving skills every year.

The ACT Foundation is the charitable organization that is establishing CPR and defibrillator training programs in high schools throughout Ontario and across Canada. Mannequins and defibrillator training units are donated to schools and high school teachers are trained as instructors to train all students prior to graduation.

“We are thrilled with the support of our partners,” says Sandra Clarke, the ACT Foundation’s executive director. “Thanks to them, we are able to donate the needed training equipment to the two high schools. Students will bring their life-saving skills to current and future families, building stronger communities and saving lives.”

To date, the ACT Foundation has set up the CPR program in more than 1,790 high schools nationwide, empowering more than 3.9 million youth to save lives.

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