



Why Stayin' Alive is part of training for some Newfoundland teachers



Teachers and students are getting CPR training

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Jacinta McGrath, a teacher in Ferryland, says she's more than happy to learn such an important skill to pass on to her students. (Katie Breen/CBC)



In a classroom in St. John's on Friday, the Bee Gees' 1977 smash hit *Stayin' Alive* played over loudspeakers as teachers and students milled about — but this wasn't a school dance.

Instead, teachers are getting schooled in CPR and they will then pass the life-saving information on to 1,000 students across four schools in Newfoundland.

"It's important for us as teachers to have that [skill], but to be able to deliver that to our kids is going that extra step," said Jacinta McGrath, a physical education teacher at Baltimore School in Ferryland.

"We're dealing with kids all day ... and we have a lot of people come through our buildings throughout the day, so to have a skill that can possibly save a life, I think is essential."



A teacher goes through the steps of CPR, including check to see if the person, in this case a mannequin, is breathing. (Sherry Vivian/CBC)

The training is offered through the Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation, a group dedicated to establishing free CPR and defibrillator training programs in high schools across

Canada. Vale is the community partner for this province.

The Bee Gees tune serves as a universal measurement for how fast the chest compressions should be done.

"Thing to remember is 30 and two: 30 compressions followed by two breaths," said McGrath.

This year's participating schools are Baltimore School in Ferryland, Brookside Intermediate in Portugal Cove-St. Philips, Holy Spirit High School in Conception Bay South and St. Peter's Junior High School in Mount Pearl.

Training teachers to train students 'a good feeling'

The CPR training will be incorporated into the participating school's curriculum so that students will get the training every year. The schools also get defibrillator training mannequins and defibrillator training units donated via the ACT Foundation.

That's "a good feeling" for Paul Westcott, an instructor/trainer with St. John Ambulance for 40 years.

"If I teach someone to teach who teaches someone else, it gets out in the community and we've had lifesaving awards go out to someone as young as six, seven years old," he said.





These teachers will now take their CPR training, thanks to instructor Paul Westcott, pictured on the far left, and pass it on to 1,000 students in total. (Sherry Vivian/CBC)

Five other schools — and hundreds of students — received the training last year: Laval High School in Placentia, Stella Maris Academy in Trepassey, St. Michael's Regional High School on Bell Island, St. Kevin's Junior High in Goulds, and Fatima Academy in St. Brides.

Westcott hopes the program continues because with knowledge and training comes confidence.

"Before [the training it's] 'I think I can' and when they leave [it's], 'I can, I can do it.' They have that skill base to go out and to step forward if there is an emergency situation," he said.

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