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These life-saving devices are now available in every high school in Quebec



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MONTREAL -- Following years of fundraising and campaigning, automated defibrillators are now available in every public high school in the province.

The ACT Foundation has not only made sure that schools have the devices which can restore a normal heartbeat, but it's ensured that thousands of teachers have been trained as CPR instructors, and trained hundreds of thousands of students to perform CPR.

Sandra Clarke, the founder and executive director of ACT, has been instrumental in getting defibrillators into schools across Canada.

She said the idea was that not only are some students unaware they are at risk of a heart attack, but that many schools act as centres for the community, and frequently are used by people of all ages.

"The ACT foundation's goal is to ensure that a defibrillator is in every high school in the country, that every young person graduates from high school knowing CPR and how to use a defibrillator so they can be empowered to save lives," said Clarke.

She pointed out when someone has a cardiac health problem, speed is the key to treatment.

"If you have early CPR by a citizen, for example, and early defibrillator in a cardiac arrest emergency, research shows you can increase the chances of survival for that person by up to 75%," Clarke told CTV earlier this year.

The initiative has already saved lives, including that of Montreal student Stephanie Goyette-Rollin.

"I had the training in CPR at my school," she said.

She collapsed in a Phys. Ed. class in January, but was saved because her teachers and friends knew CPR and had access to the defibrillator.

Health Minister Danielle McCann said the goal for the future is to keep up the training, and to ensure that year after year, students in grade nine will be trained in CPR, and how to use the defibrillator.

Students like Coralie Lefebvre said it's a skill that will follow them for the rest of their lives.

"Now I can save a life when there's an opportunity to save a life, so I can act fast and save a life," she said.

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