

# The Gazette

## **CPR - a skill everyone should learn**

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Thursday, December 18, 2008

Re: "MD should have tried CPR" (Gazette, Dec. 13).

It came as no surprise when I read that a young person, 22-year-old Sarah Swain-Lagarde, stepped forward to help the man who suffered a cardiac arrest. In fact, it is becoming more and more common for young people to respond to emergencies affecting family, friends and strangers, thanks to an initiative under way in many Quebec high schools that is seeing thousands of young people trained in CPR every year.

The Advanced Coronary Treatment Foundation helps schools across Canada to establish the CPR program for youth. ACT raises funds and donates training mannequins to schools and trains high school teachers as instructors.

We have many accounts of young people taking charge in emergencies by calling 911, and performing CPR or the Heimlich manoeuvre as needed. When interviewed afterward, they tend to modestly say they just did what they learned in gym class. We have set up the CPR program in 230 high schools and 70,000 Quebec teens have been trained.

But there is still much work to be done, as the program is not a part of the provincial curriculum and many schools therefore do not have it.

It is now a mandatory part of the curriculum in Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta, and our hope is that the Quebec government follows suit, so that this lifesaving program is in all high schools and all youth are trained.

Everyone should learn CPR.

Sandra E. Clarke

Executive director, ACT Foundation