



Ottawa high schools prepped to save lives

By Jamie Long, Ottawa Sun

All 53 Ottawa high schools are now equipped with an automatic external defibrillator and all grade 9 students are trained to use them, it was announced Friday at École secondaire publique Louis-Riel.

This has been a year-long project, with the French public school board the last join.

Defibrillators have been in the spotlight for many after 38-year-old Dave Donaldson collapsed and died April 5 while playing ball hockey.

There was no defibrillator at Rainbow Montessori School where he was playing,

Less than two hours earlier, a 52-year-old was saved when a city worker treated him with an AED after the man suffered a heart attack.

It's also a key issue for high school students since cardiac arrest is the No. 1 cause of death for young adults, according to the Heart & Stoke Foundation.

"Schools are more and more like community centres, with many high schools having hundreds or even thousands go through their halls every week," said Sandra Clarke, executive director of the Advances Coronary Treatment Foundation.

The group has put defibrillators in high schools across Canada. It has partnered with the province, Sens Foundation, Ottawa Senators owner Eugene Melnyk, and Heart and Stoke Foundation to train more than 10,000 local high school students on how to use the machines.

Training and the availability of AEDs has been pushed by paramedics for a long time, with bystander CPR and defibrillators serving as vital first steps in the chain of survival.

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board said it hopes to install the machines in its elementary schools as well, which will be part of upcoming budget discussions.