

# ObserverXtra

## Students get some hands-on defibrillator training

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We've all seen the automated external defibrillator (AED) units in hockey rinks and high schools across the region, but how many of us know how to use them?

Thanks to a new provincial program, high school students will now be trained on the proper use of AED units and how to administer CPR in the event of an emergency. More than 6,500 Grade 9 students at 20 high schools across Waterloo Region will receive life-saving training every year.

The Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation launched its high school CPR and defibrillator training program at Huron Heights Secondary School in Kitchener last Friday, and the program is set to include schools in both the catholic and public board in schools across Baden, Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Elmira.



JUST LIKE THIS Grade 11 student Courtney Tripp applies CPR to a mannequin donated by the ACT Foundation.

Two hundred mannequins and 40 defibrillator units will be distributed among high schools in the region.

"The ACT Foundation of Canada is a national charitable organization that is dedicated to preparing youth to save lives across Canada," said the organization's director, Jennifer Boissonneault, at the programs unveiling in the gymnasium of Huron Heights.

"It becomes long-term and self-sustaining."

About 30 students from the school gave dynamic demonstrations on how to use the mannequins and the defibrillators to a gathering of MPPs, health industry representatives, regional staff and teachers.

"I hope you'll never need to use these, but if and when you do I know you'll have the training to save lives," said Kitchener-Conestoga MPP Michael Harris, who mentioned the collapse of former NHL player Jiri Fischer back in 2005 as proof the students may never know when or where their new skills will be needed.

Fischer was unconscious for six minutes before being revived using CPR and an AED during a game against Nashville.

"Here in our region ACT is equipping schools with the resources they'll need to train students and allow them to step up and save lives," Harris added.

The mannequins and training AED units were made available thanks to partnerships with the Ontario Trillium Foundation which has provided \$750,000 since 2004, with pharmaceutical companies Pfizer, AstraZeneca and Sanofi, as well as Hydro One.

About \$6,000 was raised to launch the program in Waterloo Region, with the mannequins costing about \$80 apiece and the AED practice units about \$350. Similar training programs have already been started at schools in Guelph and Sarnia.

This new equipment will help bolster the current CPR curriculum, said Linda Fabi, director of education for the WRDSB.

Fabi, whose husband died of a sudden heart attack in 2007, said the school board has been training students on the use of AED's for the past three years, as well as providing CPR training to all first-year high school students.

"It is our goal to train every Grade 9 student every year," she said.

Established in 1985, ACT has established its high school CPR training program in more than 600 schools in Ontario and 1,600 schools nation-wide, empowering more than 1.8 million youth to save lives. For more information visit [www.actfoundation.ca](http://www.actfoundation.ca).