

Students learning the 4Rs of life-saving techniques
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Highland Secondary School students Heather Coburn and Nicole Alchin practice their CPR techniques.

Ancaster and Dundas high school students have been empowered by their high school teachers to save lives.

The Grade 9 students are part of a new CPR initiative that will see more than 4,000 youth a year trained in the lifesaving skill of CPR in Hamilton and surrounding communities.

The ACT Foundation of Canada, in partnership with FirstOntario Credit Union and the Government of Ontario, launched the lifesaving program at Delta Secondary School in Hamilton last month.

"The CPR trained citizen becomes the critical first link in the emergency response system when a heart attack emergency occurs," said Sandra Clarke, executive director of the ACT Foundation. "These CPR trained students can make the difference between life and death."

Eight out of 10 pre-hospital cardiac arrests occur at home, and in many cases a family member is present but doesn't know what to do.

"As an emergency physician, unfortunately I have seen too many deaths due to cardiac arrest and choking," said Dr. Michelle Welsford, medical director at the Hamilton Health Sciences Centre. "Early CPR and the Heimlich maneuver save lives and what better gift can you give than the training on how to save someone's life. Due solely to this program, I will see more people saved by the youth and educators in our community."

Through the ACT High School CPR program, students learn the four Rs of CPR. They learn about Risk factors for cardiovascular disease and the importance of a healthy lifestyle, how to Recognize the early warning signs of a cardiovascular emergency, how to React, and how to perform Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation, and the Heimlich manoeuvre.

The ACT Foundation's goal is to expand the CPR Program to every high school in Ontario.

To make this possible, ACT has secured a provincial commitment of \$650,000 from the Ontario government. Through this public/private funding model, the foundation seeks matching funds for program resources at the community level. The program is supported provincially by The Ontario Trillium Foundation, Hydro One and Shoppers Drug Mart.

To find out more, visit www.actfoundation.ca, or call 1-800-465-9111.