Empowering Calgary Youth to Save Lives

Written by Sandra Clarke, Executive Director of the ACT Foundation

The moments following a cardiac arrest are critical, and countless Canadian lives have been saved because regular citizens were able to spring into action and perform CPR.

What many Calgary residents don't know is that tens of thousands of local youth are trained potential lifesavers – and the Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation expects that number is just going to continue to grow.

More than 65,000 young people have been trained to save a life through the ACT High School CPR Program since the Calgary pilot in 2001. With the support from five Kiwanis Clubs of Calgary, as well as Alberta Education, Calgary EMS and the STARS Foundation, the ACT Foundation has successfully brought this lifesaving program to 33 Calgary high schools.

Each year 12,000 Grade 10 students are trained in both the public and catholic board.

ACT raises funds, donates training mannequins, teaching resources, and trains high school teachers as CPR instructors for their students. We have heard many incredible accounts of young people taking charge in emergencies: a sister saving her brother from choking, a teenager leaping forward to rescue a senior citizen who suffered a cardiac arrest – even a young person moving quickly and calling 911 in an emergency is an incredible act.

That Calgary's youth are learning CPR as a life skill is exciting news, and now ACT is taking on an even greater goal: expanding the High School CPR Program to include training on Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs). Though the AED expansion has started in Ontario, it is our hope that as public support continues to grow, AED units and training will be delivered to high school students across the country.

As a result, more lives will be saved.

To receive more information on how to support the ACT Foundation, visit actfoundation.ca or contact us at act@actfoundation.ca.