

Delta Optimist

Delta teachers taught to save lives

CPR training provided Monday by nationwide program will then be passed on to students

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Special to The Delta Optimist



Delta high school teachers gathered at Delta Secondary in Ladner Monday to learn CPR skills and how to teach their students the lifesaving technique.

Delta high school teachers are learning how to save lives -- and they're ready to pass the knowledge onto their students.

On Monday, almost 30 teachers from across the district gathered at Delta Secondary for an all-day workshop where they learned CPR and how to teach their students the lifesaving technique. The workshop was the first phase of a nationwide program that will equip all Delta students with CPR skills.

The program has been developed by the ACT Foundation, a charitable organization that empowers Canadians to save lives. In B.C., the group has partnered with the Ambulance Paramedics of B.C. and the B.C. Ambulance Service to highlight the importance of bystander-administered CPR.

"It's estimated that only 15 per cent of British Columbians know CPR," says Jim Christenson, vice-president of medical programs for the B.C. Ambulance Service.

The ACT Foundation hopes to counter that statistic and envisions "that every student coming out of high school will have CPR," says Favian Yee, a coordinator for the Delta school district.

The ACT program is hoping to train 50,000 students in B.C. by 2010. The program is already being taught at more than 12,000 schools across Canada.

All seven Delta high schools are part of the program and will each receive 30 CPR mannequins, giving students a hands-on approach to life-saving.

Students will be introduced to CPR during their Grade 10 physical education class, which is a requirement for graduation. Prior to the ACT program, CPR was taught in an elective Grade 11 physical education class.

"Statistically, eight in 10 heart attacks happen in the home. So, it's important that people out in the public know CPR," says instructor Trevor Zechel of the Ambulance Paramedics of B.C., "because the faster you can get CPR started, the better the outcome for the patient."

CPR can assist in keeping victims of cardiac and respiratory arrest alive, but it also increases the chances "the patient actually walks out of the hospital with little or no deficits," adds Zechel, referring to the potential brain damage that can result from a cardiac arrest.