

# Merritt Herald

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## Students learning to save lives

Living in Merritt might just save your life.

The Advanced Coronary Treatment Foundation of Canada (ACT) is a not-for-profit organization that teams with the provincial government and corporations to deliver CPR training to high schools across the country by empowering instructors with the knowledge of how to teach CPR to their students. Last Friday, 12 teachers from School District 58, three of whom are from Merritt Secondary School (MSS), attended the teacher training workshop offered at Princeton Secondary School. In turn, 161 Grade 10 students at MSS will learn how to administer CPR and take charge in life-threatening situations.

"We are going community by community to get it in every school to ensure that every high school student graduates with the ability to save lives," ACT executive director Sandra Clarke says.

So far they're about halfway there. But Clarke explains that relocation and attrition among teachers pose the threat that the program might fall by the wayside over time.

"Our concern is the sustainability of the program,"

Clarke explains.

That is why they're working to convince the Ministry of Education that CPR training should be adopted as part of the secondary curriculum in B.C., as it is in Alberta, Ontario and Manitoba.

Research indicates that administering CPR to someone suffering a sudden cardiac arrest has the potential to increase the likelihood of survival by four times.

"Training teachers to teach youth how to save a life is a tremendous asset to our communities," Interior Savings Credit Union's VP of marketing Gene Creelman says.

Interior Savings donated a total of \$36,800 to see this program implemented in the Okanagan-Similkameen, Nicola-Similkameen and Kamloops/Thompson school districts. From that funding, MSS now has 30 mannequins on which to teach life-saving techniques.

Clara Irwin, manager of the local branch, says that this initiative is in line with Interior Savings' mandate to community support and health and wellness.

"Providing our youth with the necessary skills to save a life supports our desire to support both youth and health programs."

Once fully operational, ACT's program will see that 50,000 Canadian youth are trained in CPR annually.