

## OTF Helps Bring Lifesaving CPR Training to Youth Across Ontario

CPR training may be the most important thing Toronto student Ela Mema learned in high school. If she hadn't, her mom might not be alive today.

When Ela was in Grade 11, her mother, Miranda, suffered a heart attack. It was only because Ela learned how to recognize and react in an emergency situation in her Grade 9 physical education class that she was able to save her mom's life. Recognizing her mom was in trouble, Ela quickly called 9-1-1. When her mom lost consciousness, she checked for breathing and began artificial respiration. "They [the paramedics] said that if I hadn't been there, my mom's chances of surviving would have been very slim," says Ela.

A proud supporter of the Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) High School CPR Program, the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is playing a key role in ensuring Ontario youth like Ela are equipped to "act" in an emergency – and are empowered to save lives. In 2004, OTF provided the ACT Foundation with a \$300,000 grant over three years to assist communities in implementing a CPR program in high schools across Ontario.



Student attending the CPR training.



**Heroes come in all ages**  
15-year-old Ottawa student Adam Nedergaard performed CPR on his friend's mother during a visit to Dublin, Ohio in August. His actions gave the mother of two, precious more hours of life, long enough for her family to say goodbye. The city of Dublin named October 2, 2007 in Adam's honour, highlighting to residents that you can never be too young to learn CPR – or to be a hero. Adam learned CPR in Grade 9 at Ottawa's Sacred Heart Catholic High School through the ACT High School CPR Program. The Ontario Trillium Foundation is a proud supporter of the program.

The Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation is an award-winning, national charitable organization dedicated to helping communities across Canada establish the lifesaving CPR program in all high schools so that all youth will be empowered with the skills and knowledge to save lives. Through its community-based model of partnerships and support, ACT works at the grassroots level to help communities find local partners who donate the mannequins and teacher training that schools need to set up the program. High school teachers then teach CPR to their students as part of the regular curriculum, reaching all youth prior to graduation. Once implemented, ACT guides schools in setting up and maintaining the program so that it is long-term and self-sustaining.

OTF's contribution has been integral to helping ACT bring this training north to schools in Hearst, North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Timmins, as well as to schools in communities that include Bancroft, Bruce-Grey County, London, and Windsor. OTF has also helped make the program sustainable in other Ontario communities. To date, more than 76,000 Ontario students from over 200 schools are empowered with CPR, and over 550 teachers have been trained to teach CPR to their students as a result of the Foundation's grant.

And lives – like Miranda Mema's – are being saved. Last spring, Sudbury teacher Claire Proulx-Thériault performed the Heimlich Manoeuvre on her 12-year-old daughter, Véronique, when she began choking on a piece of Easter chocolate. Claire learned this skill thanks to her school's ACT Program – and to OTF. Claire says that following the incident, her daughter's words were ones a mother could never forget. "She looked at me and said 'Mom, you saved my life'."

ACT Executive Director Sandra Clarke says provincial funding from OTF is vital to ensuring this lifesaving program can be established as a long-term program in all Ontario high schools. "The valuable support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation is enabling the ACT Foundation to help communities

establish the lifesaving ACT High School CPR Program for youth," says Clarke. "The funding we receive from the Foundation is an essential element that will ensure the program continues to grow and save lives in this province."

And with youth like Ela Mema receiving this lifesaving training, the program will continue to have a lasting impact. "If it hadn't been for my CPR class then I wouldn't have been able to save my mom because I wouldn't have known how," she says.

For more information on the ACT High School CPR Program please visit: [www.actfoundation.ca](http://www.actfoundation.ca)

### **Did you know?**

- Between 35,000 and 45,000 people die of cardiac arrest in Canada every year.
- Overall, the rates of survival from cardiac arrest are almost four times greater with CPR.
- In some parts of Canada, the number of bystanders who know how to perform CPR rates is very low. Edmonton has among the highest rates at 46%.
- 35% to 55% of cardiac arrests are witnessed, by a bystander — usually a family member or friend.
- Less than 5% of people who experience cardiac arrest outside of a hospital survive, largely because CPR is not performed at all or not started soon enough.

*Source: Heart & Stroke Foundation*

### **GRANT SUMMARY:**

In 2004, the Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation received \$300,000 OTF grant over three years to assist communities in implementing a CPR program in high schools across Ontario so that youth will be equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to save lives at home and in their communities.