Students empowered to save lives

by Malcolm Petch
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One of the most critical elements in saving a life threatened by cardiac arrest is swift access to medical help.

And since most cardiac arrest situations occur in the home, having people in the home who know what to do can be the key to survival.

That's the concept at the root of the program being launched in Kelowna schools on Monday by the ACT Foundation.

The Foundation believes that if students across the country learn the Four R's of CPR as part of their regular school curriculum, then all youth will graduate with the skills and knowledge to save lives – the skills and knowledge that are needed in every home when a cardiac emergency arises.

The Four R's of CPR the students learn:

the RISK factors for cardiovascular disease
how to RECOGNIZE a developing medical emergency
how to REACT to the situation
how to RESUSCITATE or perform CPR

The group, Advanced Coronary Treatment Foundation of Canada, works to rally support of community partners and to raise funds for program start-up resources for local schools.

ACT then guides schools in setting up a long-term, self-sustaining program with the four hour Heartsaver CPR course as a regular part of the curriculum in each school and district.

On Monday, December 1, the official launch of the ACT High School CPR Program in Kelowna, Westside, and Lake Country schools will get underway, thanks to the partnership of the Ambulance Paramedics of BC, the British Columbia Ambulance Service, and Envision Credit Union Charitable Foundation.

The event, to be held at Mount Boucherie Senior Secondary School at 10:30 a.m., will include a demonstration of a CPR class with students.

Mount Boucherie Principal Lisa McCullough and several students from the school will also be in attendance at the event, along with representatives from the ACT Foundation.

The Foundation estimates that close to 2,000 grade 9 through 12 students will be trained in this region every year thanks to this new program.