



## Teachers train to help students save lives

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An event Thursday saw nearly 30 teachers from School District 42 trained with lifesaving CPR and heart health education through the ACT High School CPR Program.

The goal was to empower them to go on and train more than 1,300 local youth with CPR each year.

The Advanced Coronary Treatment Foundation in partnership with the British Columbia Ambulance Service (BCAS) and the Ambulance Paramedics of BC (APBC) is working to bring the ACT High School CPR Program to all B.C. youth. In School District 42, ACT is receiving funding from Lead Community Partner Envision Credit Union Charitable Foundation.

Thanks to a grant of over \$55,000, each participating secondary school in Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Delta, and Mission will receive curriculum materials as well as a class set of 30 CPR mannequins.

"The ACT Foundation has already set up the CPR program in more than 1,200 schools across Canada," explains Sally O'Sullivan, chair of the Envision Credit Union Charitable Foundation. "This grant will enable them to expand the program within B.C. so that more students can be trained in this life-saving skill. The goal is to see every B.C. high school student graduate with the skills and knowledge they need to save lives."

The ACT High School CPR Program is built on a strong community-based model of partnerships and support, whereby ACT helps communities find local partners who donate the mannequins, curriculum materials, and teacher training that schools need to set up the program. Secondary school teachers then teach CPR to their students as a regular part of the curriculum, reaching all youth prior to graduation.

In B.C., ACT is partnering with BCAS and APBC to establish the program in all B.C. secondary standard schools. Full implementation in this province will see approximately 50,000 youth trained in CPR annually. Teacher training in B.C. is provided by local paramedics, who volunteer their time to prepare teachers to teach the program to their students.

The June 19 teacher training was provided by Troy Geinger, Dean Badminton and Ian Macdonald, APBC Paramedics and CPR instructors.

The ACT High School Program is supported at the national level by companies in the research-based pharmaceutical industry: AstraZeneca, Bristol-Myers Squibb Canada, Pfizer Canada and sanofi-aventis.

Cardiovascular disease is the second leading cause of death and accounts for more than one fifth of all deaths in B.C. Research indicates citizen CPR response can improve survival rate for victims of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest by almost fourfold. With eight in 10 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occurring at home, empowering youth with CPR training as part of their high school education will help increase citizen CPR response rates over the long term.

"It's estimated that only 15 per cent of British Columbians know CPR," says Dr. Jim Christenson, BCAS Vice-President of Medical Programs. "Even with the best technology, medical expertise and timely deployment of first responders, the best chance for someone in cardiac arrest is still to have a bystander perform CPR until paramedics can provide professional CPR and defibrillation."

In addition to empowering youth to save lives, the ACT Program has a strong health promotion message, says Sandra Clarke, Executive Director of the ACT Foundation. "Students learn about risk factors for heart disease and the importance of adopting heart healthy lifestyle behaviors at a young age. They will then bring their health promotion message and lifesaving skills to their present and future families," says Clarke.

To date, the ACT Foundation has set up the ACT High School CPR Program in over 1,200 schools nation-wide, empowering over 900,000 youth to save lives.

#### About the ACT Foundation

The ACT Foundation is a national, award-winning charitable organization dedicated to promoting health and empowering Canadians to save lives. ACT is driving a national campaign to establish CPR as a mandatory program in every Canadian high school. ACT raises funds for CPR mannequins for schools and guides schools in program set up. The Foundation and its core partners are winners of Imagine Canada's "New Spirit of Community Partnership" Award. Core partners are companies in the research-based pharmaceutical industry: AstraZeneca, Bristol-Myers Squibb Canada, Pfizer Canada and sanofi-aventis. They provide ACT's sustaining funding and are committed to the Foundation's national goal of promoting health and empowering Canadians to save lives. For more information visit: [www.actfoundation.ca](http://www.actfoundation.ca).