

## Teachers being trained in CPR will help their students save lives

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The teachers being trained at École secondaire St. Laurent last Friday were there to do something more important than educate their students in the three Rs.

They were preparing to teach their students to save lives.

The training was being offered through the Commission Scolaire Marguerite Bourgeoys to a handful of teachers in the basics of CPR. The program is part of the Ottawa-based ACT Foundation's mission to establish CPR training in every high school across the country.

"The impact CPR can make on a cardiac arrest is tremendous," said Sandra Clarke, executive director of the ACT Foundation. "It can increase the likelihood of survival by four times. In order to promote the chain of survival, we thought about what sustainable approach we could use. And we decided that our niche should be the school system."

Working with government and corporate sponsors like the Pfizer pharmaceutical company, ACT is able to equip schools with 30 mannequins and someone to train about three to five teachers per school. In Quebec, the training is donated by Urgences Santé. It costs about \$3,500 to set up each school, but the beauty of the system is that the program can then continue indefinitely, although there does have to be some new teacher training and refresher courses.

"We have 4,500 students trained every year by teachers in Montreal," said Clarke, adding that the program is in about 38 Montreal high schools already.

She said there is still a lot of work to do in Montreal and is hoping that increased awareness about the program will prompt other schools to sign up as well.

Nathalie St. Georges, a science teacher at École secondaire de la Pointe aux Trembles, was one of the teachers being trained in St. Laurent last week and she thought the program was excellent.

"It's just a basic training, like a reflex in an urgent situation," she said. "But it can be used to save a life and now I can teach students this important technique. It's important for young people to have this information."

Clarke said ACT's goal is to ensure that every young person learns CPR as a basic skill as part of their education. In fact, she said, Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta have made CPR a mandatory part of the curriculum.

There are now 37,000 students being trained each year across the country, and Clarke said both students and teachers love the program.

"It empowers the students and they love that," she said. "And the teachers believe it's a very important component of health education."

For information on the ACT Foundation, go to [www.actfoundation.ca](http://www.actfoundation.ca).