

## Halton region high schools launch CPR training program

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Aldershot high school students demonstrate CPR/AED skills.

High schools in the Halton region have launched a new training program geared towards providing students with skills that could one day help save a life.

7,000 Grade 9 students in Halton will now receive both CPR and defibrillator training every year.

The training is being made possible through a public-private partnership between the Ontario government and the ACT foundation, which works with companies and community organizations to raise the funds to provide, in this case, 700 mannequins and close to 100 defibrillator training units.

ACT executive director Sandra Clarke says the training is about empowering students in the event of an emergency.

“Students will know to perform CPR if someone has suffered a cardiac arrest, and they’ll know to pull that defibrillator off the wall in a public place and use it to save a life.”

“The students also learn how to recognize the symptoms of a heart attack or a stroke,” she adds.

Clarke says in the past some schools would bring in outside agencies to train students, but oftentimes those courses could only be offered for a limited time or to a certain number of students based on funding.

She points out that this new approach trains teachers, making it a permanent fixture in the curriculum.

Since 2008, ACT has introduced cardiopulmonary resuscitation and automated external defibrillator training to 648 Ontario schools.

Clarke says the next step is Hamilton’s high schools.

She says ACT is fundraising to enhance the current CPR program through the addition of defibrillators.

Clarke refers to the training as a key life skill — one she believes is becoming increasingly important as defibrillators continue to be added to more public locations throughout the region.

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