

Mississauga of the Credit First Nation students, community members learn CPR

‘This curriculum will empower students with the skills and knowledge to save lives’

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Sara Jane Souliere, First Nation and Metis relations with Hydro One, was on hand to help Grade 6 through 8 students at Lloyd S. King Elementary School, like Aiden Laforme, receive CPR and defibrillator training. - Hark Nijjar photo

Knowing what to do in an emergency could literally mean the difference between life and death.

That's why 28 students in grades 6, 7 and 8 at Lloyd S. King Elementary School and 13 community members of Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation were recently given training in CPR and using an automated external defibrillator (AED).

"This training is so important, especially with research indicating that early CPR, combined with early defibrillation, can increase the chance of survival for cardiac arrest victims by up to 75 per cent," said Sandra Clarke, executive director of the ACT (Advanced Coronary Treatment) Foundation.

The foundation is working to establish free CPR and AED programs in Canadian schools.

About 80 per cent of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests happen either at home or in public places, which is why the ACT Foundation is working to equip students with the life-saving knowledge, so that, over time, the CPR response rate will go up.

The ACT Foundation is a charitable organization that relies on partnerships – including with Hydro One, AstraZeneca Canada, Sanofi Canada and Amgen Canada – to operate.

Local partners donate mannequins and AED training units to schools, and then the teachers instruct the students on how to perform CPR and to use an AED.

The intention is that, eventually, all youth will get the instruction before they graduate.

As students get trained, "They will bring their life-saving skills to current and future families, building a stronger community and saving lives," Clarke said.

To date, more than 1,800 CPR programs have been set up at Canadian schools through the ACT Foundation, and more than 4.6 million youth have received training.

Derek Chum, vice-president of Indigenous relations at Hydro One, praised the program.

"Whether at home, school or work, this curriculum will empower students with the skills and knowledge to save lives," he said.

For more information, visit actfoundation.ca.