6,500 youth will be trained to save lives

BY WENDY SOLODUIK

This time, it's the teachers that got schooled.

On Tuesday, June 26, 200 teachers from York Region were taught life saving skills through the Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation High School CPR and Defibrillator Training Program. They now join the rankings with teachers from Simcoe County, who were trained through the ACT program in March, 2011.

Now equipped with these life-saving skills, teachers will go on to train more than 6,500 students from 24 schools throughout Simcoe County each year, including St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School in Tottenham and Banting Memorial High School in Alliston, with the help of over 480 durable mannequins and 52 defibrillator training units, being donated to schools.

The ACT Foundation, a national charitable organization that is establishing CPR and defibrillator training programs in all Canadian high schools is, "committed to bringing the program to all high schools across Canada", with the help of national health partners, AstraZeneca Canada, Pfizer Canada, Bristol-Myers Squibb Canada, and sanofi-aventis. And local community health partners: Alliston Lions Club, Rotary Club of Alliston.

The ACT training program is built on an "award-winning community-based model of partnerships and support" funded by provincial partners The Ontario Trillium Foundation and Hydro One.

According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation, "eight in 10 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur at home (school)". Early CPR, combined with early defibrillation can increase survival rates for cardiac arrest victims by up to 75%.

"We are thrilled with the support of ACT's partners. Without them, this lifesaving program would not be possible," says ACT Foundation executive director Sandra Clarke. "To date, the ACT Foundation has set up the High School CPR Program in more than 1,600 schools nationwide, empowering more than 1.8 million youth to save lives."