

## TEACHERS AND SCHOOL BOARD EXCITED ABOUT PROGRAM THAT TEACHES PROPER USE OF DEFIBRILLATORS

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A dozen area high school teachers from School District 53 received a crash course last week on how cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) combined with the use of defibrillators help save lives.

And they plan on sharing that information with hundreds of local students as part of a provincial campaign to educate all high school students on how to properly use automated external defibrillators (AED) as an enhancement to the CPR program the Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation has already established across this province.

The teachers spent seven hours last Thursday in a room at the Oliver parks and recreation department facility as B.C. Ambulance Service paramedic and CPR instructor Anne Benn provided a full day of instruction on how to properly use the machines.

Working with mannequins that are donated by various community sponsors as part of the program, the teachers were given certificates of course completion following their full day in the classroom. They will now be passing on what they learned to Grade 10 physical education students in the coming weeks and months.

"I've taken CPR training and had some defibrillator training, but I had never actually worked on an actual defibrillator," said Lauren Ibaraki, a teacher at Similkameen Elementary Secondary School in Keremeos. "The thing that impresses me the most is how easy these machines are to use.

"They have voice instructions and commands that tell you exactly what you need to do every step of the way, so there's nothing to be afraid of. These defibrillators are now available in almost every public building you can think of and it's nice to know so many young people are going to receive training on how to use them and will be able to help save lives as a result of this program."

Shannon Miller, the vice-principal at Osoyoos Secondary School, was one of the dozen teachers who participated in last week's training session.



*Lauren Ibaraki, a teacher at Similkameen Elementary Secondary School in Keremeos, performs CPR on a mannequin during a workshop last week in Oliver. A dozen area teachers participated in the workshop to learn how to properly use an automated external defibrillator. Teachers will pass on the skills they learned to Grade 10 physical education students across School District 53 in the coming weeks and months. Osoyoos Secondary School vice-principal Shannon Miller (sitting) looks on, while certified trainer Anne Benn leads the workshop. Photo by Keith Lacey.*

Cindy Gilbert, the executive assistant to the superintendent of schools within School District 53, said the fact that every high school in the province will soon have easy access to an AED defibrillator and every high school student in the province will have proper training on how to use them is very exciting news.

"It's definitely going to save lives," she said.

The fact there are so many community partners on board to provide funding to purchase the mannequins and AED defibrillators is also very encouraging, she said.

Interior Savings is donating a total of \$117,000 over the next three years in support of the program.

"We are very proud to be partnering with the ACT Foundation in support of the defibrillator program," said Gina Chapman, the branch manager with Interior Savings in Oliver. "Interior Savings will be donating \$117,000 over a three-year period to several different school districts.

"Cardiovascular disease is the No. 1 killer worldwide."

Chapman shared a personal story with the teachers and school administrators who attended the workshop. Her husband Vince has had two heart attacks – one at age 40 and the other at age 46 – and he wasn't doing anything strenuous during either one, she said.

"We were lucky because my husband's heart had stopped and if the Penticton Hospital had not had the drug RPA, he would have died," she said. "RPA is a clot buster that goes right to the clot and clears it immediately. My husband now has four stints in his arteries. It's unfortunate for him, but heart disease is hereditary in his family as his mom died at age 28 and his grandma at age 55.

"I have no doubt this defibrillator program will help save lives. It's an awesome program and Interior Savings is proud to be a supporter."

Mary Adams, B.C. project manager with the ACT Foundation, said Interior Savings and the Osoyoos Credit Union have helped donate funding for the donation of three AEDs, eight AED training kits and eight AED training mannequins for area high schools.

AstraZeneca Canada, Pfizer Canada and Sanofi are ACT's health partners who provide regular funding, enabling the program to be offered at all secondary schools in B.C. and across Canada, she said.

"People often think we are a government organization, but there is a wonderful public/private partnership and support to bring this lifesaving program to schools at no cost in a manner that schools can sustain over a long period of time," she said.

The ACT Foundation is a national charitable organization dedicated to establishing free cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) as a mandatory program in every Canadian high school. The program is built on ACT's award-winning community-based model of partnerships and support.

ACT raises funds for mannequins and resources for all high schools and guides schools in the program set-up. High school teachers are trained as CPR and defibrillator instructors for their students.

More than 4,000 teachers are trained as instructors and ACT has already donated more than 40,000 durable mannequins to high schools, ensuring a one-to-one mannequin to student ratio.

To date, more than 1.8 million youth have been trained by their high school teachers, with an additional 250,000 being trained each year.

Established in 1985, ACT's mission is to promote health and empower Canadians to save lives by seeing all youth graduate high school students with skills and knowledge to save lives.

The program also has a strong health promotion component, encouraging youth to adopt healthy lifestyle habits at a young age, said Gilbert.