



WHITBY -- Donald A. Wilson Secondary School student Shannon English did compressions on a mannequin with the aid of an automated external defibrillator, at an event that celebrated the installation of AEDs in all elementary and secondary schools in the Durham District School Board on Sept. 25. Grade 9 students, as part of their physical education credit, in all DDSB secondary schools are now receiving training on how to use the life-saving devices. **SABRINA BYRNES / METROLAND**

Durham students learn to save lives

All Grade 9 students to get defibrillator training

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DURHAM -- When Ontario Power Generation's Jamie Chevers was playing racquetball at the Pickering Recreation Complex, his heart stopped.

"It turned off like a switch," he said. "There was no breathing, no pulse. Nothing."

Thankfully, he was in the presence of people who were trained to use an automated external defibrillator, and in a building that houses the lifesaving device.

"Without the defibrillator and people who know how to use them, I wouldn't be here," he said.

Mr. Chevers, representing one of many community partners at an event held at the Durham District School Board, celebrated a new program that has all Grade 9 students



WHITBY -- Donald A. Wilson Secondary School student Madison Hall, demonstrated CPR on a mannequin with an automated external defibrillator on hand.

across Durham Region learning how to save a life with a defibrillator. This is on top of the training in CPR that they already receive.

The Advanced Coronary Treatment Foundation and partners launched the ACT High School CPR and Defibrillator Training Program on Sept. 25, as part of the board's safety week.

"It's an excellent project and it will truly make a difference," said public school board chairman Joe Allin.

Each year, more than 7,000 high school students from 25 high schools in the Durham public and Catholic boards will be trained in the program.

"With defibrillators being more available in hockey arenas and other public places, we can be assured that thousands of young people will know how to perform CPR and will know how to pull that defibrillator off the wall to save lives throughout Durham," said Sandra Clarke, executive director of the ACT foundation.

After sponsors Sanofi, AstraZeneca and Pfizer Canada donate the equipment, teachers are trained on defibrillators and then do four hours of training with Grade 9 students, as part of their physical education course.

"I feel like the course, it makes you so much more comfortable with the idea of trying to save someone's life," said Grade 10 Donald A. Wilson student Kama Moore.

"Without the defibrillator and people who know how to use them, I wouldn't be here."
Jamie Chevers, Ontario Power Generation

A physical education teacher at the school, Lisa Hardy, said the students find it easy to learn how to use the device.

"They feel comfortable to go grab an AED and use it quickly," she said.

Grade 10 Donald A. Wilson student Ally Johnston said in the beginning, she was a little nervous to learn about something that would put her in the forefront of saving someone's life, but after the training, she gained confidence.

"In a real situation I feel like I could save someone's life because they teach you to be leaders and feel comfortable and confident with it, so I think I could," she said.