

Business

Lessons in life-saving

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Grade 10 students Jaein Jeong, left, and Sunje Cho practise CPR and defibrillator techniques on Tuesday. Photograph by: Jeremy Deutsch



When Casey Kingman was called down to the gym at Terry Fox Secondary in Port Coquitlam about a student who had fainted, the teacher had no idea her training was about to save a life.

When she got down to the gym that day last year, two other teachers were already providing CPR to the boy who had collapsed.

The student had no pulse and wasn't breathing. So Kingman's training kicked in.

She ran and grabbed supplies from the first aid room, including a fairly recently installed Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

The student pulled through, and the quick action of the teachers and availability of the AED are credited with saving his life.

Kingman was alongside her life-saving colleagues Tuesday at Port Moody Secondary, as a new initiative was launched across School District 43.

The district and one independent Catholic school are partnering with the Advanced Coronary Treatment Foundation (ACT) to launch the ACT High School Defibrillator Training Program, in which 2,500 Grade 10 students at area schools will be trained to use the machine.

Through the program, the students will be trained by their teachers on how to recognize and respond to a medical emergency, as well as to use the AED.

In all, nine schools using 66 physical education teachers in the Tri-Cities will implement the program, while ACT will donate 40 defibrillator mannequins and 40 defibrillator-training units.

Kingman, Terry Fox's first aid attendant, said the situation at her school is proof CPR and AED training can be used anywhere and in any situation.

"Anyone can help save a life with proper training, and the more people that are able to get training, hopefully we'll have more stories like this," she told a group of students and dignitaries at the launch of the program.

School District 43 Supt. Tom Grant noted many of the students spend a lot of their life out in the community and at public places.

"As we get more and more of these devices, it will be those wonderful young people ... who will be trained on how to use them on citizens that need them," he said.

Coquitlam-Burke Mountain MLA Doug Horne called the initiative an important program for the community.

"Now that we're going from a CPR program to having defibrillator training as well, it really does provide so much benefit to our community, and so much benefit to all of us," he said, adding when a situation does arise, the students won't be afraid to act.

As for the students, they're also pleased to learn the new life-saving skill.

Grade 10 Port Moody Secondary students Jaein Jeong and Sunje Cho have both been trained on how to use CPR and the AED, and feel they'll be ready for an emergency.

"We've had a lot practice," Jeong told the Tri-Cities NOW.

Cho chimed in that using the machines isn't all that hard.

The ACT Foundation is the national charitable organization that is establishing CPR and defibrillator training programs in Canadian high schools.