

# Arnprior EMC

## Students to get ACT together for CPR/AED training

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BY DAVID JOHNSTON

EMC News - A new partnership will help teach lifesaving skills to high school students in the Ottawa area.

A special presentation May 28 at Holy Trinity Catholic High School in Kanata unveiled a citywide program that will see more than 10,000 Grade 9 students in 51 local high schools learn Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and how to operate an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

With local sponsors such as the Sens Foundation, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario and the Government of Ontario, the Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation is creating the Ottawa ACT High School AED program.

Sandra Clarke, Executive Director for the ACT Foundation, praised the local groups for their commitment to community by supporting the new initiative.

"The ACT High School CPR Program is based on a successful community-based model of partnerships and support. This program is part of our national campaign to develop CPR and AED training in long-term sustainable programs in Canadian high schools," said Clarke.

Through this initiative, the ACT Foundation rallies the support of community partners and raises funds for program start-up resources for schools, including CPR training mannequins, teacher training and materials. ACT then guides schools in setting up a long-term, self-sustaining program. High school teachers teach their students the four-hour Heartsaver CPR course as a regular part of the curriculum. This ensures all youth will graduate with the skills and knowledge to save lives.

Madeleine Meilleur, Ontario Minister of Community and Social Services and MPP for Ottawa-Vanier, was on hand to offer support for the new program.

"This program is part of a three-year, \$450,000 commitment from the Government of Ontario to help 200 high schools in Ontario to set up the CPR and AED program," said Meilleur. The Government of Ontario invested \$1.4 million in 2008 as seed funding to help the ACT Foundation expand the AED training program to all Ontario high schools.

Ottawa Senators President Cyril Leeder also addressed the gathering on behalf of Sens owner Eugene Melnyk.



*David Johnston, Arnprior EMC*  
Demonstrating CPR technique for Madeleine Meilleur, Ontario Minister of Community and Social Services and MPP for Ottawa-Vanier, and Ottawa Senators President Cyril Leeder are Jordan Scott and Dylan Lawrence, both Grade 9 students at Holy Trinity Catholic High School.

"When you have a chance to save a life, you act on that to make a difference," said Leeder. "Cardiac arrest can strike anywhere, anytime and is a leading cause of death among young athletes. The Sens Foundation is proud to be in this partnership."

Joanne Cote, Resuscitation Programs Manager for the Ontario Heart and Stroke Foundation, quoted the Sens motto "a force united" as an apt way to describe the partnership.

"We have a strategy and a plan with a record of success," said Cote. "There are no losers today, only winners."

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario has committed \$280,000 to help the training program this year. Cote added that 2,800 AEDs are already located in public buildings, such as arenas, across the province. She said the program has saved 22 people so far, including a 20-year-old in Ottawa.

"The number of lives saved can only increase with the number of AEDs in public places."

The majority of cardiac arrest victims do not receive citizen CPR, and many lives could be saved if it were available before the arrival of emergency medical services, said Cote. "CPR and AED training can increase the chance of survival by up to 75 per cent."

With most out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occurring at home, early recognition of a cardiac emergency by a family member, early access to medical help (calling 911) and early citizen CPR are critical to saving lives.

To establish the CPR and AED training programs, the ACT Foundation first gains a commitment from schools for a long-term, self-sustaining program. Then ACT brings together community partners to provide start-up resources for schools. These partners include corporations, foundations and service clubs who support ACT's community coordination role and donate funds for mannequins, teacher training and materials.

ACT then secures partnerships with local CPR agencies such as St. John Ambulance, the Red Cross and the Heart and Stroke Foundation to train high school teachers as CPR instructors for their students. The Medical Director for the local Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Agency provides medical direction.

A strong volunteer base drives program implementation. Schools own the program, high school teachers teach their students, and mannequins are donated by the community.

"This program will be an enhancement to the CPR Program the ACT Foundation established in high schools," said Sandra Clarke.

Dr. Jennifer Adams, Superintendent of Curriculum for Ottawa-Carleton District School board, said, "we want education to go beyond the classroom with life skills that improve life. Thanks to this program we now have thousands of high school students who can give back to their community through the use of their CPR and AED skills."

Following the formal presentation, a group of grade nine students from Holy Trinity provided a classroom demonstration of CPR and AED response.

David Johnston is a freelance writer currently on assignment for the EMC.