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JESSICA CUNHA PHOTO

Dylan Lawrence shows off what he's learned while he puts a defibrillator device on a CPR dummy during a demonstration at Holy Trinity Catholic High School on Friday, May 28. A new program will see over 10,000 Ottawa students trained on the device each year. See story on page 5.

Shocking addition to schools

Defibrillators added to first aid arsenal

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KOURIER-STANDARD

Students at Holy Trinity Catholic High School demonstrated their ability to perform CPR and use a defibrillator on Friday, May 28.

The demonstration was part of the Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation's initiative to train more than 10,000 Ottawa high school students each year on how to use the equipment.

"It teaches us how to be able to react when something is wrong," said Grade 9 student Jordan Scott, who was a part of the demonstration. "Obviously (it teaches us) how to save other peoples' lives."

The Ottawa ACT High School AED Program ensures all 51 high schools in the Ottawa area have an automated external defibrillator (AED) and program training equipment.

“With the new dummies, they are more life-like,” said Scott.

The dummies are more flexible and easier to work with, mimicking the way a human body would react, she said.

Using CPR in conjunction with a defibrillator in the first few minutes of someone going into cardiac arrest can improve survival rates by as much as 75 per cent, according to the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

“I think this is one of the most important things to know,” said James McCracken, director of education for the Ottawa Catholic School Board.

All Ottawa Grade 9 students will now receive training on AED use, along with the standard CPR program.

“These programs are an important learning tool, they help save a life,” said Madeleine Meilleur, MPP for Ottawa-Vanier and minister of community and social services. “The more knowledge a person has, the more likely they are to save a life. Having these programs in our area high schools will benefit our communities.”

According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation, about 40,000 Canadians experience sudden cardiac arrest each year.

“They (AEDs) need to be as common place as fire extinguishers,” said Joanne Cote, manager of the resuscitation programs with the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

An AED is a device that can tell when a heart stops beating effectively and deliver an electric shock to help it restart.

The machine talks to the user, telling them if the electric pads are not placed properly on a person’s chest and when to stop body contact with a person about to be shocked.

“The schools provide us with a wonderful opportunity to empower all youth to save a life,” said Sandra Clark, executive director of ACT. “By setting up the CPR and AED programs in high schools we can ensure all students graduate with life-saving skills.”

ACT partnered with the Government of Ontario, the Sens Foundation, Ottawa Senators owner Eugene Melnyk and the Heart and Stroke foundation to launch the Ottawa-wide program.

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Jordan Scott shows the audience how to perform proper CPR during the assembly to promote ACT’s initiative to train 10,000 Ottawa area Grade 9 students every year on CPR and AED. Dylan Lawrence, left, waits to use the defibrillator.