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## **Niagara Region High School Students to Receive Lifesaving AED Training Program, High Schools to Receive AEDs**

### **5,700 students will be trained annually to use Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)**

ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO--(Marketwire - Feb. 5, 2010) - The Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation is thrilled to announce that as a result of a unique new partnership between ACT, the Government of Ontario, FirstOntario Credit Union, and Heart Niagara Inc., more than 5,700 Niagara Region high school students in 30 schools will be trained each year on the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). This lifesaving training will help expand students' capacity to respond to cardiac emergencies beyond their CPR training.

An AED is an easy-to-use device that can tell when a heart stops beating effectively and deliver an electric shock to help restart the heart. Funding will provide an AED for 23 Niagara high schools, adding to the schools in the region which already have an AED. Funding will also provide AED training units and mannequins for student training. This generous donation will ensure every high school in both the District School Board of Niagara and the Niagara Catholic District School Board has the lifesaving unit on site, as well as the knowledge and training to use it in emergencies that might involve teachers, students, or citizens attending adult education or community events.

FirstOntario Credit Union is providing the funds to establish the ACT High School AED Program in Niagara Region schools. The program will be an enhancement to the already established region-wide Grade 9 CPR training program, run by ACT partner Heart Niagara Inc. Also contributing is the Government of Ontario, which in 2008, invested \$1.4 million as seed funding to help the ACT Foundation expand the AED training program to all Ontario high schools. ACT's four core partners, AstraZeneca, Bristol-Myers Squibb Canada, Pfizer Canada and sanofi-aventis, provide sustaining funding for the ACT Foundation, and are committed to ACT's efforts to establish the program in the Niagara Region and across Canada.

"I am pleased our government has partnered with the ACT Foundation to deliver lifesaving AED training and AED units to high schools across Niagara," said St. Catharines MPP, Jim Bradley. "Having these devices located in our high schools is both a valuable learning opportunity for our youth and will benefit the overall health and safety of our community."

"This is an excellent program that gives our youth the skills to save lives at home and in our communities," said Niagara Falls MPP, Kim Craiton. "I am amazed that through this program, each year more than 5,700 students in the Niagara Region will be empowered to save lives."

Research shows that citizen CPR, combined with the use of an AED, can considerably improve survival rates if applied in the first few minutes of a cardiac arrest.

"FirstOntario Credit Union is committed to helping our communities prosper," says FirstOntario Credit Union President and CEO Kelly McGiffin. "This AED enhancement program is a valuable initiative and one we are very proud to support in the Niagara Region. The AED equipment and training program is an important aspect in the safety and protection of the whole community. It is truly a privilege to play a key role in the empowerment of local youth, and afford them the opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills to save lives."

"It is an unfortunate reality that cardiac arrest can strike people of all ages and fitness levels, often with little warning. This training will help ensure that our students have the confidence, ability and resources to act during an

emergency. This program both reinforces and strengthens the DSBN's commitment to student and staff safety. We are very appreciative of our partners' support on this initiative," says Warren Hoshizaki, Director of Education for the District School Board of Niagara.

"Niagara Catholic has a commitment to student and staff health and safety with trained emergency response teams at all Board sites. Through the support of Heart Niagara, students and staff in our Niagara Catholic elementary and secondary schools are trained in emergency first aid to respond quickly in a medical emergency," said Niagara Catholic Director of Education, John Crocco. "Automated defibrillators provide essential medical technology in an emergency. We are grateful to our partners for providing Niagara Catholic with a defibrillator in each of our Catholic secondary schools and the training to educate our students in such a practical, essential, life-saving skill."

"Training young people in CPR and AED gives them the tools to help others in overcoming sudden cardiac arrest in our schools and in the our community," said Dr. Doug Munkley, Medical Director Community Public Access Defibrillation, Heart Niagara Inc. "It also gives them a greater awareness of the impact of heart disease and helps to strengthen the message about making healthy heart lifestyle choices."

"We want to thank FirstOntario Credit Union for their support as lead community partner, and the Government of Ontario as ACT's key provincial partner for this important program," said Sandra Clarke, Executive Director of the ACT Foundation. "We would also like to thank Heart Niagara Inc. for their leadership in providing both health education and CPR training to local youth, and now, AED training. It is because of ACT's committed partners at the community, provincial and national level that we have achieved this incredible success."

#### About the ACT Foundation

The ACT Foundation is a national, award-winning charitable organization driving a national campaign to establish CPR training in all high schools across Canada. ACT raises funds to donate mannequins, teacher training, manuals and other materials to schools. ACT also guides schools in program set-up to ensure long-term sustainability of the program. Teachers then train their students as a regular part of the curriculum. More than 1,400,000 youth have been trained in CPR across Canada to date through the ACT High School CPR Program. ACT is currently enhancing the CPR program in Ontario with Automated External Defibrillator (AED) training and AEDs for schools. Core partners behind ACT's campaign in Ontario and across Canada are AstraZeneca, Bristol-Myers Squibb Canada, Pfizer Canada and sanofi-aventis.

#### About FirstOntario Credit Union

In business since 1939, FirstOntario Credit Union serves over 71,000 Members and offers a full suite of banking products including daily banking, mortgages, lines of credit, loans and investments. FirstOntario has over \$2.2 billion in funds under management and currently has 17 branches serving 11 communities within the Hamilton, Halton, Niagara and Haldimand/Norfolk regions. Membership is open to anyone living in Ontario. Deposits are insured up to \$100,000 by Deposit Insurance Corporation of Ontario (DICO).

To learn more about ACT's teen heroes visit [www.actfoundation.ca](http://www.actfoundation.ca) or [www.youtube.com/theactfoundation](http://www.youtube.com/theactfoundation).

#### For more information, please contact

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