



NEWS RELEASE

Chemainus, Duncan, Lake Cowichan and Mill Bay Teachers to Empower Local Students to Save Lives *More than 700 students will be trained in School District No. 79 annually*

Where: Frances Kelsey Secondary School
953 Shawnigan-Mill Bay Rd.
Mill Bay, BC
V0R 2P0

When: Tuesday, January 26, 2010
8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m., suggested time for media 10 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Mill Bay, BC – On January 26, 15 teachers from School District No. 79 Cowichan Valley will be trained to empower students with lifesaving CPR skills and heart health education through the award-winning ACT High School CPR Program.

Teachers from Chemainus, Cowichan, Frances Kelsey, and Lake Cowichan Secondary Schools as well as Cowichan Valley Open Learning Cooperative, will participate in the ACT High School CPR Teacher Training Workshop at Frances Kelsey Secondary School. This training will result in more than **700 local Grade 10 students** trained annually by their teachers to use this lifesaving skill.

The Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation is working in partnership with the British Columbia Ambulance Service (BCAS) and the paramedics' union, the Ambulance Paramedics of British Columbia - CUPE Local 873, and community partners to bring this program to all BC public secondary schools. BCAS provides ongoing project funding, and when available, paramedics volunteer their time to train secondary school teachers to teach CPR to their students. Once the program is set up in all public secondary schools, approximately 50,000 youth will be trained in CPR each year.

The ACT High School CPR Program is built on a strong community-based model of partnerships and support, whereby ACT helps communities find local partners who donate the mannequins, curriculum materials, and teacher training that schools need to set up the program. Secondary school teachers then teach CPR to their students as a regular part of the curriculum, reaching all youth prior to graduation.

In School District No. 79 Cowichan Valley, ACT is receiving funding from lead community partners AstraZeneca, Pfizer Canada and sanofi-aventis. Thanks to their generous grant of \$13,750, five participating secondary schools in Chemainus, Duncan, Lake Cowichan and Mill Bay will receive 122 CPR mannequins as well as curriculum materials.

"This is a great example of how a public-private partnership can have a major impact on the health of our communities," said Mark Jones, Chair of the ACT's Board of Directors and CEO of AstraZeneca. "With this program, we want to ensure that each and every young person graduates with the skills to save a life."



The January 26 teacher training is being provided by Mike Wright, BCAS paramedic and CPR instructor trainer.

Cardiovascular disease accounts for more than one fifth of all deaths in BC. Research indicates citizen CPR response can improve survival rate for victims of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest by almost fourfold. With eight in 10 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occurring at home, empowering youth with CPR training as part of their high school education will help increase citizen CPR response rates over the long term.

"It's estimated that only 15 per cent of British Columbians know CPR," said BCAS Vice-President of Medical Programs Dr. Jim Christenson. "Even with the best technology, medical expertise and timely deployment of first responders, the best chance for someone in cardiac arrest is still to have a bystander perform CPR until paramedics can provide professional CPR and defibrillation."

"In addition to empowering youth to save lives, the ACT Program has a strong health promotion message," says Sandra Clarke, Executive Director of the ACT Foundation. "Students learn about risk factors for heart disease and the importance of adopting heart healthy lifestyle behaviors at a young age. They will then bring their health promotion message and lifesaving skills to their present and future families."

To date, the ACT Foundation has set up the ACT High School CPR Program in more than 1,350 schools nation-wide, empowering more than 1.4 million youth to save lives.

About the ACT Foundation

The ACT Foundation is a national, award-winning charitable organization dedicated to promoting health and empowering Canadians to save lives. ACT is driving a national campaign to establish CPR as a mandatory program in every Canadian high school. ACT raises funds for CPR mannequins for schools and guides schools in program set up. The Foundation and its core partners are winners of Imagine Canada's "New Spirit of Community Partnership" Award. Core partners are companies in the research-based pharmaceutical industry: AstraZeneca, Bristol-Myers Squibb Canada, Pfizer Canada and sanofi-aventis. They provide ACT's sustaining funding and are committed to the BC program and ACT's national goal of promoting health and empowering Canadians to save lives. For more information visit: www.actfoundation.ca. To view a selection of videos on our student heroes visit www.youtube.com/theactfoundation.