

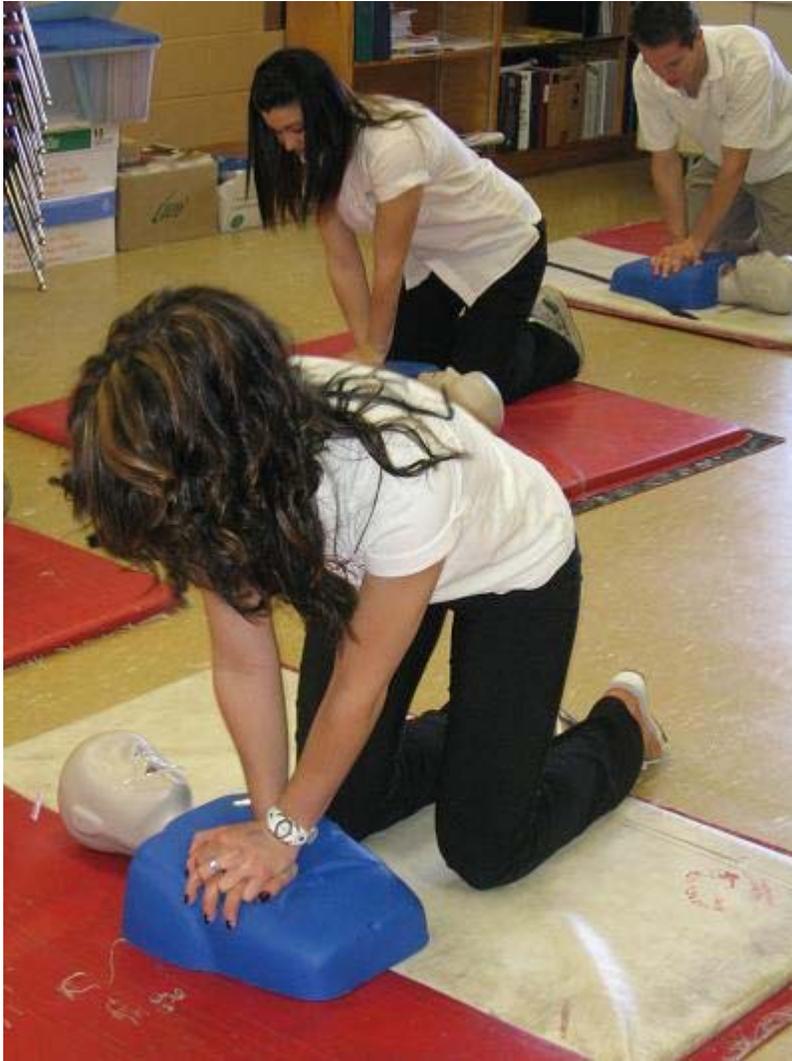


Area students empowered to save lives

By Kate Adams

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Students of École secondaire catholique Algonquin demonstrate CPR on donated mannequins from ACT.

Seconds save lives and thanks to the ACT Foundation (Advanced Coronary Treatment), in partnership with the North Bay Professional Paramedics Association (NBPPA), area high school students in the region now have the resources to jump into action when an emergency arises.

In association with the Ontario government, Hydro One, Shoppers Drug Mart and the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the ACT High School CPR Program was launched this week in North Bay.

The award-winning program will see 750 Grade 9 students from five area high schools empowered to

save lives every year. In order to run the program, seventeen physical education teachers have been trained as CPR instructors and in turn will train their students using the 115 mannequins donated to their schools.

"It's a fantastic step it's going to empower 750 youth in our whole district to be trained and provide CPR when it's required," states Marc Picard NBPPA spokesperson.

"Every minute counts, every second counts, so the sooner somebody can initiate CPR and lifesaving assistance the easier it's going to be for the paramedics when they get there ... and the likelihood of survival will be so much better."

With the Ontario EMS Week kicking off Sunday Picard says the launch of the program is a timely one and will help with the paramedics' message in Mattawa, North Bay, South River and Sturgeon Falls.

"These 750 students are going to take this information and they are going to bring it home to their parents, grandparents and their friends," he states.

"And it's going to spread and the more people we have that are knowledgeable and trained the better it's going to be for all of us."

Picard also notes the importance of the program outside of the schools especially in rural communities.

"There's youth in our community everywhere, they're not only going to use these skills to help people at school, they're going to use these skills when something happens in the shopping mall or a community centre or anywhere in any of our communities."

The ACT High School CPR Program is built on ACT's award-winning community-based model of partnerships and support and MPP Monique Smith says the Ontario government is proud to make funding in the Nipissing District possible.

"The announcement is incredibly important for our community because it's going to provide an added resource when we have an emergency situation," says Monique Smith, Nipissing MPP.

"So we've created the infrastructure that will allow all of our grade 9 students moving forward in these three boards to receive training and CPR and be able to respond quickly when emergencies arise."

Picard says he anticipates the program growing to encompass the Public Access Defibrillation (PAD) program.

"CPR is a prerequisite to public access defibrillation and we hope that next year we'll be having the same discussion in relation to a PAD program in the high schools."

To date, the ACT High School CPR Program is in over 400 Ontario high schools and over 600,000 Ontario students have been empowered to save lives.