

Sunnyvale freshmen trained for life-saving future



Lt. Steve Drowniany oversees the City of Sunnyvale's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) program but knows he can't always respond himself when an emergency occurs. So he wants to be sure others know how to react.

Thanks to his efforts, the City of Sunnyvale could become one of the safest places in the San Francisco Bay Area to have a heart attack. Some 1,000 freshmen in the city's two high schools have recently been trained in CPR and they, in turn, have trained hundreds more family members and friends.



In his role with the city's EMS program Drowniany serves as a police officer *and* firefighter *and* trained paramedic for the Department of Public Safety. He says that in striving for the fastest possible response to cardiac emergencies city officials "were frustrated that here, as with the national average, few patients receive layperson bystander CPR."

He explains, "We continuously evaluate our response to emergency medical services calls, and one area always difficult to address is bystander CPR."

"It's so important because almost 80 percent of heart attacks happen at home and victims are often with a family member or friend," Drowniany notes. "The national survival rate for patients in cardiac arrest is only around six percent. With the life-saving intervention of CPR, the patient's chance of survival is dramatically improved."

He came up with the idea of training the community's high school Class of 2012 in CPR using the American Heart Association's CPR Anytime personal learning kits, and he secured grant funding to make it happen. Drowniany explains the state Education Code asks California schools provide CPR education "when appropriate equipment is available." That availability is often limited because of lack of funding.

Thanks to a \$25,000 grant from Severns Family Foundation, each freshman at Sunnyvale's Homestead and Fremont high schools received CPR training in October. Each student received a CPR Anytime Kit and its 22 minutes of training and then took the kits home to train family and friends.

Drewniany says, "The introduction of the CPR Anytime Kit by the American Heart Association provided the perfect vehicle for low cost CPR training to large numbers of people in a minimal amount of time."



The ninth-graders at both high schools were encouraged to train their family and friends within a week of their own training. As an added incentive, the student and faculty member at each school who went on to train the greatest number of people won a prize.

Dave Severns, president of the Severns Family Foundation, says he supported the program because "it can save lives." His interest in matters of the heart is personal – his family has

a history of heart disease affecting past and present generations. He believes this program will definitely save lives in the future.

Drewniany points out that training 1,000 high school students will have a significant multiplier effect in years to come – in Sunnyvale and other communities where these young people live, work or visit throughout their lives.

[Learn more about CPR Anytime.](#)

CPR: a life-saving history

The first and earliest wide-spread published findings for cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) appeared in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1961. Drs. William Kouwenhoven, James Jude and Guy Knickerbocker from Johns Hopkins, explained their research in applying external cardiac massage (CPR) on 118 patients. The American Heart Association had funded these researchers early in their careers and their ground-breaking CPR study was supported by our Maryland Affiliate.

The American Heart Association's CPR Committee was established in 1963 and in the same year, the association formally endorsed CPR. In May 1966 the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences convened an ad hoc conference on cardiopulmonary resuscitation after requests from the AHA and other agencies to establish standardized training and performance standards for CPR.

The association has played a key role over the years legitimizing CPR into standard practice. Our national CPR Committee evolved into Emergency Cardiac Care (ECC), becoming the gold standard for ECC care, and publishing formal statements, guidelines and updates. Beyond that, awareness efforts have imprinted the critical importance of CPR in our nation's mindset. A wide-variety of training options can put this life-saving procedure in everyone's hands.