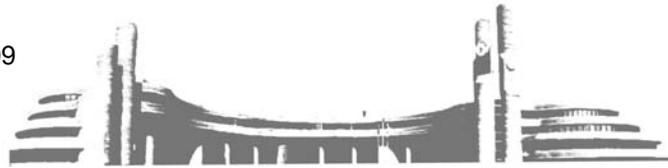


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For Immediate Release



The Regional Municipality of York, the Town of Georgina and the Heart and Stroke Foundation team up and save a man's life

Courage, training and community partnerships make this the first "save" in the history of York Region's HeartAlive Automated External Defibrillator program

NEWMARKET – A 60-year-old man's life was saved as a result of the quick and courageous response from a Town of Georgina employee and the partnerships between The Regional Municipality of York, the Town of Georgina and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario (HSFO).

On the evening of November 16th during a Committee of Adjustment hearing in the Town of Georgina, a gentleman suffered sudden cardiac arrest and collapsed. Sandra Houghton, a member of the Town's staff, reacted quickly by deploying and using a York Region *HeartAlive* automated external defibrillator (AED). The patient was successfully resuscitated and regained consciousness. When paramedics arrived on scene minutes later, they initiated care and transported the patient to hospital where he is now recovering.

"This event could have had a much more tragic ending, but instead it is an example of how community partnerships save lives and enhance the health and well-being of York Region residents," said York Region Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch. "AED and CPR training provided by York Region Emergency Medical Services (EMS), the commitment from the Town of Georgina to participate in the *HeartAlive* program and the financial investments made by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario and their donors has made this the first "save" in the history of our very own *HeartAlive* program."

An AED is a portable device used to treat victims of sudden cardiac arrest. The AED delivers an electric shock that momentarily stops activity in the heart, giving the heart an opportunity to restart normal electrical activity and resume beating effectively.

York Region's existing public AED program, *HeartAlive*, has been facilitating the placement of the AEDs and training in staff on CPR and AED use since 2003. Currently, 58 AEDS in 31 Regional workplaces have been installed and York Region EMS has trained over 500 Regional staff, York Regional Police employees and municipal employees to be AED targeted responders.

In 2006, The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario established the Heart and Stroke Restart a Heart, a Life Program and the Chase McEachern Tribute Fund. In 2007, the Ministry of Health Promotion announced a \$3 million donation to the HSFO for the placement of life-saving AEDS in priority public sites across Ontario. York Region EMS was approached by the HSFO to take a leadership role in administrating this initiative to York Region municipalities.

York Region municipalities have responded to this initiative and an additional 93 AEDs have been installed in municipally managed public facilities across the Region. Ten of the 93 units were allocated to the Town of Georgina.

"We recognize that defibrillators save lives and our Council has been working with York Region EMS since the *HeartAlive* program began," said Town of Georgina Mayor Robert Grossi. "By adding more units to our

existing inventory and providing municipal staff with training on AED use, we are demonstrating our commitment to ensuring public safety in our community.”

In addition to the provincial funds, the purchase of the additional 93 AEDs was made possible by the Heart&Stroke Restart a Heart, a Life Program and the Chase McEachern Tribute Fund with the generous donation from the Al Palladini Legacy for Life Fund, PACE Polo for Heart and Transamerica Life Canada.

“Over the past three years, we have received generous donations to our Heart&Stroke Restart a Heart, a Life Program and the Chase McEachern Tribute Fund from individuals, community groups and our corporate sponsors. With these funds we have been able to allocate 2,795 AED units in communities across the province,” said Marco Di Buono, Director of Research, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario. “This life saved is a testament to what happens when individuals in the community learn CPR and when an AED is within reach.”

According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation, up to 85 per cent of cardiac arrests occur at home or in public places, and almost half are witnessed by a family member or friend. In Ontario alone, approximately 7,000 out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrests occur annually. The survival rate of victims for an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest is a dismal five percent. However, while CPR is being performed by a bystander while Emergency Medical Services is on its way, quadruples a person’s chance of being successfully resuscitated. Furthermore, defibrillation when used in conjunction with CPR in the first few minutes can dramatically improve cardiac arrest survival rates by more than 50 per cent.

The Town of Georgina officially recognized the courageous action of this staff member at a recognition ceremony at its Council meeting earlier this week.

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