



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA RELEASE

**County of Santa Clara First in State to
Place AEDs in Every Public School**

(Santa Clara County, CA.) Actions speak louder than words, where there's a will there's a way, and now, an AED in every school. That's what Santa Clara County has accomplished in just four years.

What began as a pilot program co-managed with the non-profit organization Racing Hearts to put automated external defibrillators (AEDs) into a few locations quickly grew into a county-wide program where AEDs were placed at every public school that did not already have the devices. At the start of the program in 2014, less than 10% of all schools in the county had onsite AEDs; now the coverage is 100%, making Santa Clara County the first county in the state with full public school AED coverage.

"I am so proud that Santa Clara County is the first county in the state to have this necessary life-saving equipment on each of its campuses," stated County Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Mary Ann Dewan.

A total of 810 AEDs, or automated external defibrillators, have been placed at 682 sites in Santa Clara County, with the majority located in public elementary, middle and high schools. Additional AEDs have also been placed in community centers and other public places where people gather or where those at a high risk for heart attacks live. When the program closes at the end of 2018, 846 AEDs will be placed at 718 sites throughout Santa Clara County.

Sudden cardiac arrest can strike at any time in people of all ages and fitness levels. Over 300,000 people, including 7,000 young people, die each year from sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). Often, SCA occurs in young persons between the ages 10-19 years old, but it can still strike in children of all ages without warning. With this in mind, the County of Santa Clara embarked on a program so that more people would have a tool on-hand that can help save a life. (more)

“When I first proposed a pilot project to distribute AEDs,” said Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian, “I hoped we could use the same model to expand over time—until the entire County was wall-to-wall with life-saving coverage. With help from our partners, we’ve done it. And as we now know, these 21st Century AEDs are as close to foolproof as anything can be. Blanketing the County with them really has saved lives,” said Simitian.

“In an emergency situation when every second counts our schools in Santa Clara County are now equipped to save lives because of the AED program. It’s a milestone moment for the people in our county. We had a goal of equipping all schools and we did it,” said Supervisor Cindy Chavez.

Public access models, like the ones placed through the partnership between the County of Santa Clara’s Emergency Medical Services Agency and Racing Hearts, are easy to use and capable of defibrillating a cardiac patient before the ambulance arrives.

The survival rate for those experiencing a SCA is 5-8% when traditional cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is used, and increases to 80% with the use of AEDs. AEDs increase survival rates because they can restore a normal heart rhythm in victims of sudden cardiac arrest.

Since 2014 the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors has provided \$1,050,000.00 in matching funds for the Santa Clara County AED program. Local school districts, nonprofits, government and public agencies, foundations, and individuals provide the matching dollars for placement of the AEDs for their organization. Racing Hearts oversees the budget, placement and training for the AED program.

“The residents of Santa Clara County should now know that if they experience a Sudden Cardiac Arrest, they have an extra chance towards survival and the opportunity to keep their family together” added Racing Hearts founder Stephanie Martinson.

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ABOUT RACING HEARTS

Racing Hearts was established as a 501(c)3 in 2012 and exists to eliminate sudden cardiac arrest deaths through the deployment and education of AEDs. Since 2012, Racing Hearts has deployed 840 AEDs and increased the heart safety of over 1.7 million community members.

ABOUT THE COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA

With a \$7 billion budget and more than 70 agencies/departments and more than 18,000 employees, the County of Santa Clara plans for the needs of a dynamic community, provides quality services, and promotes a healthy, safe and prosperous community for all. The County provides essential services including public health protection, environmental protection, medical services through Santa Clara Valley Medical Center (SCVMC), child and adult protection services, homelessness prevention and treatment, roads, park services, libraries, emergency response to disasters, protection of minority communities and those under threat, access to a fair criminal justice system, and scores of other services, particularly for those members of our community in the greatest need.