

Grant helps with AED placement

The New Leipzig-Elgin Ambulance Service has purchased 15 new automated external defibrillators (AEDs), thanks to a \$15,000 grant from the Grant County Community Foundation.

The ambulance service also purchased one AED for training, along with replacement batteries and patches for current AEDs. Those AEDs will now be up to date for years to come.

"We appreciate the support of the Grant County Community Foundation in keeping our AEDs up to date and available in our local communities," says Jacobson Memorial Hospital Care Center EMS Director Cary Kehr.

New AEDs have been placed in the lower level of the hospital, Our Place Cafe, the New Leipzig Community Center, the Elgin Community Center and three in the Elgin-New Leipzig Public School. Another AED will be placed in the rural Ebenezer United Church of Christ. Those replace AEDs that have exceeded their service life.

An additional location is on the Elgin-New Leipzig Public School's activity bus. Last year, an AED was added at Gooseneck Implement and at the Elgin golf course during the season. Additional AEDs will be placed in new locations in New Leipzig and Carson once permissions are granted.

The replaced AEDs will be refurbished and placed in additional locations or be given to the rural firefighters or emergency medical responders who live in the remote areas of Grant County.

Lake Tschida also has AEDs in various locations. Earlier, 19 emergency medical technician jump bags and more than 35 AEDs have been placed around the lake, targeting all areas of increased population during the summer months.

The goal is to have a community prepared to respond and assist if an individual has a cardiac emergency. To do this, it is important for individuals to be able to recognize a cardiac emergency, know how to dial 911 to access first responders immediately, begin CPR and have public access to AEDs. Residents are encouraged to be aware of the location of the AEDs within the community, so an AED can be accessed as quickly as possible during a cardiac emergency.

AEDs correct a lethal heart rhythm, called a ventricular fibrillation.

"The faster we can get a defibrillator to them and deliver the shock, the more likely they are to survive. The American Heart Association has said for every one minute that passes, the chance of survival decreases by 10%," Kehr says.

"It's so important to have these AEDs," he says. "The success rate when you get there within a few minutes can be pretty astounding."

"The nice thing about this machine is you don't have to be medically trained to use it," Kehr says.

An AED is a portable electronic device which uses audio and visual commands to direct a layperson to treat a cardiac emergency through the application of the device.

When the AED is opened, a power button is pushed, which is clearly marked. The machine does a self test, then leads the user with instructions. Kehr has included a face mask, a trauma scissors to cut clothing and razors inside each as well. Razors must be used if chest hair impedes the connection of the patches.

The new AEDs also have a pediatric feature in which a key card is inserted into the machine to downgrade the amount of electricity delivered to a child. Everything is labeled, with the pediatric key in a pouch and the insert slot labeled.

"The advantage of that is we don't have to have adult and pediatric patches in each machine," Kehr says.

JMHCC will also host a community class on lifesaving CPR skills, Stop the Bleed and the use of Narcan for the public at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 30, at the Elgin Community Center. Watch for more details about that event.