

As an Anchorage School District nurse, Kathy Bell addresses many health-related concerns, but one she is passionate about is educating as many people as she can in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

On August 18, The Loren Marshall Foundation, the Anchorage Fire Department, and the American Heart Association sponsored a breakfast and luncheon to present information to a large group of well-know community leaders about a program Bell piloted last year: “CPR Anytime” kit training. Bell’s pilot program originally encompassed all 8th grade Goldenview students, but this year will include all 8th grade ASD students. The ultimate goal is for the training to be made available to every 8th grade student in the state of Alaska.

For years Bell has taught CPR throughout the community. More recently, at one of her trainings, Jim Foster, Anchorage Battalion Fire Chief told Bell about “CPR Anytime” kits and the fact that they could be purchased for approximately \$30.00. The kits include a practice manikin, a DVD, instructions, and other accessories.

Bell had the idea that if students were taught CPR and given the CPR kits, they would be able to become truly proficient, enough so to teach others. Bell met with Julie Maker (Bell’s principal), Sharon Vaissiere, Nancy Edtl, and Carol Comeau about her idea. After receiving their full support and buy-in, Bell eventually made a presentation to the Anchorage School Board and received permission to pilot her idea at Goldenview Middle School.

Bell, with the help of Foster, began to look for funding so that she could purchase enough kits to give one to each 8th grade student at Goldenview, where Bell is currently a nurse. At Goldenview, every 8th grader is required to take PE; therefore, if CPR was taught during their PE course, every 8th grade student could receive the instruction and a kit; no one would be left out.

Al Parish, the CEO of Providence Hospital, said Providence would fund 400 kits. During the pilot program, the 8th grade Goldenview students were taught CPR and given a kit. On one of the days the students were being instructed, Carol Comeau, Al Parish, and Sharon Vaissiere were invited to a luncheon and to observe the instruction. Principal Maker and Goldenview’s guests loved what they saw.

As part of the student’s homework and grade for the course, each student had to teach four other people. The students were required to turn in documentation signed by their parents and the people they taught.

After agreement by all that the pilot program was a huge success, Parish and Foster met to see if they could help get funding for every 8th grade student to receive a kit. Parish and Tom Cramer, CEO of the Alaska Heart Institute, agreed to fund this year’s much expanded program. In addition, the Anchorage Fire Department will send some firemen to assist with the training. Also some nurses have agreed to assist with the instruction.

In the hopes of being able to grow the program to include students state wide, The Loren Foundation, the Anchorage Fire Department, and the American Heart Association invited a large group of well-known community leaders and politicians to their choice of either a breakfast or luncheon. The list

included Carol Comeau, Dr. Doug Eby of the Rasmussen Foundation Board, Fran Ulmer, Dan Sullivan, Wally Hickel, Alaska State Representative Les Gara, State Senators Johnny Ellis and Bill Wielechowski, US Senators Mark Begich and Lisa Murkowski, and Representative Don Young to name a few.

Bell is excited and extremely grateful that the program has grown so quickly, and she credits all the support she has received from Foster, Parish, Cramer, her principal and ASD administration, in general, for the program's success.