

# ASAP news



Continuing the Little League tradition of making it "safer for the kids."

## Could YOU Save a Life?

*CPR training is a growing part of the annual training that leagues provide to their volunteers, for everyone's protection. Does your league?*

This year, ask your board a simple question: If called on, could they save a player or spectator's life? With proper CPR training, more leagues' volunteers are able to answer "yes."

According to the American Heart Association, cardiovascular disease is the number one killer in the U.S., accounting for 1 of every 2.8 deaths in 2005. Almost 2,400 people die of CVD every day, or one American every 37 seconds. Is your league ready for a sudden cardiac emergency?

### Winning Program

In 2008, Unicoi County Little League in Erwin, Tenn., took a solid safety plan and took it to the next level to win the national award for having the best league safety plan. Part of that plan included providing cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automatic external defibrillator (AED) training for their volunteers.

"This year we offered CPR training to our coaches for the second year," explained Pam Banks, league president. "Last year we had a coach who had a heart attack right after leaving the fields, so everyone



*The Unicoi County Little League provided CPR training to its volunteers to enhance their safety preparation last year and this spring; some are shown here learning CPR in 2008.*

understands how important this is." Unicoi used an all-day American Red Cross CPR/AED training program.

### Volunteers Being Trained

Other leagues are looking at developing similar corps of trained volunteers to be prepared for any emergency. In Destin, Florida, first-year safety officer Shawn Phillips had the complete support of her board when she proposed providing CPR training in conjunction with a new automatic external defibrillator. Destin Little League soon had a great response from those wanting to take the all-day class. "Through our annual safety budget, we were able to fund buying the AED and holding the training," Phillips said. "If I had not had the support of the board, this could not have happened."

Phillips said even though the CPR certification is good for two years, the league will offer the training again next year to increase the number of certified league volunteers.

### Encourage By-Stander Action

Studies have found that a majority of heart attack victims were not given CPR from bystanders while the ambulance was en route to the accident site, even though people around the victim had knowledge of CPR techniques. It is important that leagues train their volunteers to be able to perform CPR and give them the confidence to do so if needed.

With the advent of AEDs, more tools are available to leagues to help cardiac victims, young or old. But training is needed to build the skills to successfully perform the steps required and to encourage the volunteers to use the training.

CPR should begin as soon as a cardiac event is recognized, whether to a player or a spectator. And AEDs should be located close enough to have minimum delay in their use, too. Time is crucial in these situations, and every minute does count. Would your volunteers be able to save a life?



# AEDs Becoming a Low-Cost, Peace-of-Mind Safety Initiative

*Destin Little League Safety Officer Shawn Phillips called local agencies in her town to find a grant to help underwrite the cost of the new AED that the league's board purchased this year.*

*Automatic External Defibrillators are the new safety equipment in public places; take a tip from Destin Little League and ask locally for programs that might help make this a reality for your league.*

“What I did was start making a lot of phone calls,” said first-year Safety Officer Shawn Phillips. She was describing her efforts to find funding for an automatic external defibrillator in her small Florida town, and suggesting a way for others to follow in her league’s path.

A major issue with the publicity surrounding chest trauma causes in the last year, AEDs are a growing trend in public spaces. Little Leagues around the country are coming to terms with their responsibility to be good stewards of the safety of the young people entrusted in their care, as well as the older spectators for whom heart disease is the number one killer.

## **Players AND Parents May Benefit from AED**

“There are parents and grandparents and players out there, and this makes us feel more prepared if something were to happen,” Phillips explained. “At a Pee Wee football game, two local fire fighters told me about an AED program they have. Through the grant program, we were able to buy a Philips AED. This is the same model used by our county’s emergency response units. We’re really thrilled.”

With support from its local board of directors, the Destin Little League purchased the AED, and provided training on its proper use. The League also provided the general CPR training that can be used on its own to save a life. Having an AED that integrates well with the rest of the community is important, as different brands do function slightly differently. Check with your local hospital, fire department, and schools to see if they have AEDs and which brands they use.

## **Liability Concern Shouldn’t Stop Leagues**

Other leagues have called with concerns over liability if they have an AED. Dan Kirby, risk management director

at Little League International, cautions that AEDs have the same requirement for proper use and training of volunteers as other equipment. “People should be trained on AEDs just like they need to be trained on proper use of a pitching machine, a riding lawn mower, or any other piece of equipment the league uses.”

Kirby noted for properly trained volunteers, if they act appropriately, the Good Samaritan Law (which is in place in some form in every state in the country) will generally apply. The four main points of the Good Samaritan Law are as follows: the care was rendered as the result of an emergency, the initial emergency was not caused by the person rendering care, the emergency care was not given in a grossly negligent or reckless manner, and aid was given with permission whenever possible to obtain it.

Kirby pointed out that in our litigious society there is liability in not having one, just as there is for having an AED.

“Leagues need to have good practices in place for any equipment, including an AED. The league needs to ask if they have an appropriate location for storage and access of the unit, if the people are trained appropriately, and assess what is going on locally if they need this piece of equipment,” he noted. “The cost has come down a lot on AEDs, and they are more readily available now.”

## **AED ‘Very Do-able, Even for Smaller Leagues’**

“It is out there. It’s very do-able, even for smaller leagues like ours,” Phillips stated. “If I hadn’t made the phone calls, I wouldn’t have known this was out there.” She credits her board with funding the AED and the training, and she sees this as something other leagues can do, too.

“Any move that enhances their equipment to render help is a good thing,” Kirby summarized. “The more extensive the first aid kit and the training preparing volunteers to use the equipment, the better for the league. These are all good things.”

For more information on AEDs, see the January/February 2008 ASAP News, page 3; and the April 2007 ASAP News, page 2-3; or go to [www.robbylevinefoundation.org](http://www.robbylevinefoundation.org).