

Are you CPR trained? Consider it

Last year our church, Holy Trinity Lutheran on Rosemary and Pickard, started a wonderful new health and wellness ministry within our congregation. In addition to incorporating health awareness and a variety of programs and activities to enhance our quality of life, they

recently sponsored an evening cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training course. Since I tried to increase awareness of emergency preparedness when I wrote about it recently, my wife and I decided that we should both be better prepared to

take care of each other.

Our three outstanding instructors, Caroline, Dawn and Jeff, came from the South Orange Rescue Squad, another one of our local resources that makes this the special community that it is. They see offering these courses as a part of their mission to educate the public. With the support of a generous grant from Strowd Roses Inc., a nonprofit foundation dedicated to supporting the greater community, the South Orange Rescue Squad is able to offer free CPR and AED (Automated External Defibrillator) classes to individuals and groups within our county.

Our class of two dozen ranged from university students to fully retired but extremely active senior citizens. Our instructors asked us why we were taking the course. We had some who needed a refresher course for their jobs, but we had more than a few who decided that it was just a good thing to learn or re-learn. In my

case, the last course that I had taken was back in the early 1990s and CPR had changed. Learning the current procedures seemed like a good idea.

We watched a video about CPR and its importance before we started our practical work. The take-away message was that numerous studies clearly show that effective CPR performed immediately improves survival from cardiac arrest. Since cardiac arrest can occur in your presence, knowing how to perform it properly can help save family, friends, co-workers or people you don't even know.

We also learned that in 2005 new CPR guidelines were established with the goal of simplifying CPR for lay rescuers and health care providers alike to maximize the potential for early resuscitation. When the video presentation ended and the questions were asked and answered, our instructors told us to pair up, find a spot on the floor, and then one team member needed to go get our practice dummy. My wife returned with the new training device that the Strowd Roses grant made possible.

This plastic fellow was really state of the art compared to the old ones. You could breathe into his mouth and make his chest move, and this was helpful when practicing your two breaths at one second each. When you did your 30 compressions, you could also feel his chest move, making the training so much more realistic than it used to be. We also were trained on the use of a mask that can be used if it is available.

We each practiced the required actions for adults and children over 8 years old, for children under 8, and for infants under 1 year old. We also learned what to do differently if we were alone or

in the company of others. It was stressed that if alone with a child or infant, you do your five cycles (two minutes) before calling 911. If others are around, you get them to call 911 immediately.

We were reminded that in this era of cell phones, you can't always assume the phone will work. Another valuable piece of information was that the local 411 people are not able right now to identify the origin of a cell phone call.

After practicing our cycles of two breaths at one second each and 30 compressions and passing our test, we exchanged our adult dummy for an infant-sized one and practiced more cycles using our fingers instead of our hands. We were tested again and then watched a video presentation on the AED device. Lastly, we learned and then practiced choking management, or simply removing an obstruction in the airway for adults, children and infants.

After a couple of hours, we were all pretty tired, not to mention a little sore from being on our knees on the floor. But all of that was significantly overshadowed by our satisfaction from learning the current CPR steps and choking management techniques. Our top-notch instructors made it a superb learning experience.

This is a great course for individuals and for other groups to offer their members. You can contact the South Orange Rescue Squad at 967-1515 or e-mail them at sorscpr@sorescue.org to arrange training sessions. This is really a good thing to do!

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