

# School-Based Cardiac Emergency Response Plan

## Information for Parents

The safety of your children while they are in our care is paramount to us. The American Heart Association, in collaboration with more than 10 national health and safety organizations\* just released a brand-new Cardiac Emergency Response Plan for schools.

We are pleased to announce that our school is among the first in the nation to implement this lifesaving plan.

### Could a cardiac emergency really happen at our school?

Unfortunately, yes, it could. In 2013, the American Heart Association reported 9,500 cases of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in youth.

At Bixby High School, school staff members Josh Smith and Roland Vernon were prepared to act swiftly and confidently when their teenaged student Jonathan Fussell went into cardiac arrest. Their school had a cardiac emergency action plan, and that very plan **saved Jonathan's life**.

### Prompt response saves lives.

Across the United States, even the best emergency medical services (EMS) systems can't reach cardiac arrest victims for 3 to 5 minutes. Therefore, **the actions taken by bystanders during the first few minutes of a cardiac emergency are critical**. Prompt action can double or triple a victim's chance of survival.

### What is a Cardiac Emergency Response Plan?

A Cardiac Emergency Response Plan is a written document that establishes specific steps to take during a cardiac emergency in a school setting.

Our staff will be involved in these essential elements: establishing an effective communication system; training anticipated responders in CPR and automated external defibrillator (AED) use; obtaining access to an AED for early defibrillation; acquiring the necessary emergency equipment; coordinating and integrating on-site responder and AED programs with the local EMS system; and practicing and reviewing the response plan.†

### Why is it important?

A carefully orchestrated response to cardiac emergencies will reduce death and disability in school settings like ours and help ensure that chaos does not lead to an improper or inadequate response. Preparation is essential.

### Parents, we need your help!

As teams of our school staff learn CPR, **we encourage all parents to learn CPR** through one of these options:

1. Take 60 seconds to watch the free Hands-Only CPR video at [www.heart.org/handsonlycpr](http://www.heart.org/handsonlycpr).
2. Locate and attend a classroom-based CPR and AED course. Visit [www.heart.org/cpr](http://www.heart.org/cpr) and click the red "Find a Course" button.

For more information, visit [www.heart.org/CERP](http://www.heart.org/CERP).

\*The CERP Task Force member listing is at [www.heart.org/CERP](http://www.heart.org/CERP) in the "Partner Organizations" document.

†Drezner JA, Rao AL, Heistand J, et al. Effectiveness of emergency response planning for sudden cardiac arrest in United States high schools with automated external defibrillators. *Circulation*. 2009;120(6):518-525. doi: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.109.855890.