

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**American Heart Association, Louisville Metro EMS and JCPS
groundbreaking new CPR training program for students**

Today, 373 students in the Jefferson County Public School system learned cardiopulmonary resuscitation. This is just the beginning.

The seventh graders who learned CPR at Farnsley Middle School were the first to benefit from Educate, Resuscitate, Celebrate Life, a groundbreaking new program of the American Heart Association, Jefferson County Public Schools and Louisville Metro.

Representatives of the American Heart Association, the Jefferson County Public Schools, and Louisville Metro launched the program with a news conference at the school.

“The theory is, if you teach the kids, they can teach their families – or be able to perform CPR on a family member,” Louisville Metro Mayor Jerry Abramson said. “The majority of sudden cardiac arrests happen in the home, so it makes sense to target families – and schools are the easiest way to reach families.”

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation and defibrillation are the first line of defense against sudden cardiac arrest—where a person stops breathing, collapses and heartbeat stops. With no heartbeat, there is no circulation of oxygenated blood to the brain. Survival chances drop 7 percent to 10 percent per minute, which means in most cases a person can survive perhaps 10 minutes.

That’s where CPR comes in. A rescuer providing breaths and chest compressions can help a victim stay alive until emergency responders arrive. Because most cardiac arrests occur at home, the most likely rescuer is a family member or friend.

But most victims of cardiac arrest don’t receive bystander CPR, and only 3 percent to 5 percent live to walk out of the hospital.

Educate, Resuscitate, Celebrate Life uses the American Heart Association’s Family and Friends CPR Anytime kit, which includes a guide booklet, a DVD and a practice mannequin. Funding for the program was provided by Medtronic, a maker of automated external defibrillators.

The program is rolling out first in Jefferson County Public Schools “Health Promotion Schools of Excellence.” Other schools will follow.

Heart disease is a serious public health threat—and the number-one killer in Kentucky and across the United States. Sudden cardiac arrest claims between 250,000 and 350,000 lives each year. Only 3 percent to 5 percent of patients survive to walk out of the hospital.

WHO: 7th graders; JCPS; the American Heart Association; Louisville Metro EMS; Mayor Jerry Abramson.

Louisville's situation is even worse, with heart disease at 2.2 times the national average.

WHAT: An important and groundbreaking approach—integrating lifesaving CPR skills into the Jefferson County Public Schools curriculum.

Prompt CPR may double chances of surviving sudden cardiac arrest, but the likelihood of someone performing it is low. Fewer than one-third of victims receive CPR.

WHERE: Farnsley Middle School, 3400 Lees Lane, Louisville, KY

Most cardiac arrests occur at home, where family or friends may see and respond. Immediate action is necessary: Call 9-1-1 and start CPR.

WHEN: 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, September 29, 2009

Educate, Resuscitate, Celebrate Life will train a new cadre of first-responders and complement Mayor Abramson's nationally recognized "Healthy Hometown Movement."

WHY: Cardiac arrest is a medical emergency. The heart stops beating, breathing ceases, and the person collapses. No oxygenated blood circulates to the brain. Without immediate CPR and defibrillation, survival chances drop 7 percent to 10 percent per minute.

The direct benefit: many more people will be ready to initiate CPR and use an AED.

HOW: AHA instructors have trained teachers, and teachers will train their students with the American Heart Association's "Family & Friends CPR Anytime" kit. Using its DVD, booklet and practice mannequin, a person can learn CPR in about 22 minutes.

Students who learn CPR can then teach their family members. Educate, Resuscitate, Celebrate Life will be an ongoing program in Health Promotion Schools of Excellence.