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## Lamorinda is becoming HeartSafe

By Cathy Dausman



Members of Moraga Movers club practice CPR during a recent meeting at Saint Mary's College  
Photo Cathy Dausman

There's a brand-new "Best" in Lamorinda - that of best possible chance of survival for someone experiencing out-of-hospital cardiac arrest.

Moraga, Lafayette and Orinda are becoming HeartSafe communities, joining HeartSafe programs established in Alamo, Brentwood, Clayton, Concord, Danville, El Cerrito, Kensington and San Ramon.

"It's all about promoting the chain of survival," says Lamorinda Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Dennis Rein. Rein says out-of-hospital cardiac events are the leading causes of death nationwide and 90 per cent of victims will die without early intervention. But five things - early 911 access, early cardio pulmonary resuscitation, early defibrillation, early advanced life support and integrated post-cardiac care - greatly increase a victim's odds of survival.

"The first three are all things that we can do," he said.

Response time is critical, says Rein "even with the best trained emergency responders," because the survival odds decrease 10 percent for every minute the onset of advanced life support is delayed.

Local support for the program comes from Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, Contra Costa County Emergency Medical Services, Moraga-Orinda Fire District and RESCUE ONE Foundation.

Learning CPR and having access to AEDs is critical. Lamorinda currently has nearly 90 AEDs in public places; their exact locations can be found on PulsePoint mobile app.

The big goal for Lamorinda is to teach residents to recognize the signs and symptoms of a heart attack and have them call 911 instead of driving to the hospital, says Lisa Vajgrt-Smith, with CCC EMS. Rein says even hands-only CPR increases the survivability rate yet it can be learned in only 45 minutes. He hopes to train 1,000 Lamorinda residents this year, and the program is off to a good start. Thirty Lamorindans took CPR training through a Parks and Recreation Department-sponsored class in Moraga last month. Lafayette and Orinda BART passengers got fliers May 1 (May is Stroke Awareness Month). Fifty-two MOFD Open House attendees learned hands-only CPR in Orinda earlier this month, and approximately 130 Moragans had CPR training during a recent meeting on the Saint Mary's College campus.

Countywide nearly 30,000 people have been CPR trained since January, 2012. Nationwide the average of CPR trained bystanders is approximately 30 percent; already it is 42 percent throughout Contra Costa County and "closer to 80 percent" in HeartSafe communities. "We're working on improving those numbers," said Vajgrt-Smith.

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