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Making Orinda and Moraga HeartSafe

Submitted by Ryan Kaelle



Photo provided

Ryan Kaelle, a Boy Scout in Orinda's Troop 237, partnered last spring and summer with members of Contra Costa County's American Medical Response, Emergency Medical Services and Lamorinda Community Emergency Response Team for his Eagle Scout service project. For Kaelle's project, he organized and led a team of volunteers from both Troop 237 and National Charity League Acalanes Chapter to increase awareness and education for automated external defibrillators at local businesses, schools, and institutions in Orinda and Moraga. AMR maintains a listing of the approximately 80 AED devices in the community. Kaelle and team spent over 100 hours May through August updating the AED list and, where possible, providing education and awareness materials and inspecting the actual devices to make certain they are ready in an emergency. Another goal of the project was to spread the message that AEDs are not scary, are very user friendly and can be used by anyone in an emergency situation to save a life.

An AED analyzes the heart's rhythm and guides a first aid provider to deliver a shock to a victim of sudden cardiac arrest. This shock is called defibrillation and may help the heart re-establish an effective rhythm. More than 160,000 Americans suffer a cardiac arrest every day, and for every minute that passes before returning the heart to a normal rhythm, the chance of survival decreases by 10%.

To continue the partnership and education, local paramedics came to a Troop 237 Monday meeting in December to educate on AEDs, CPR, Stop The Bleed and basic first aid. Over 50 Scouts attended the session with the goal of preparing them to react quickly in emergency medical situations.

Now that Kaelle's Eagle project is complete, AMR, EMS and Lamorinda CERT can determine where more AEDs are needed, which will ensure Orinda and Moraga are HeartSafe communities (a formal designation assigned by the American Heart Association).

Special thanks to Dennis Rein at Lamorinda CERT, Anna Cleese at AMR, Joanny All and Geoffrey Martin at EMS for the guidance they provided for this project.

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