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Hills library receives automated defibrillator

Patrons and employees at the Rochester Hills Public Library have an extra measure of protection now that the building is equipped with a life-saving device that can aid someone suffering from cardiac arrest.

The library recently received an automated external defibrillator -- also known as an AED -- from Crittenton Hospital's Employee Unlimited Potential group.

The AED uses a powerful electric shock to stop an abnormal heart rhythm and allows the heart to return to a more normal beating pattern.

Unlike models of defibrillators used by health care professionals, AEDs do not require extensive medical knowledge to understand or operate. The expertise needed to analyze the heart's electrical function is programmed into the device, and enables ordinary people to provide treatment to victims of sudden cardiac arrest.

The AED provides clear voice prompts that instruct the user to attach the electrodes and then stay clear while the device automatically analyzes the patient's heart rhythm. If needed, the user is prompted to remain clear and deliver the life-saving defibrillation shock.

"Our goal is to protect the lives of our employees and library visitors," said Christine Lind Hage, library director. "Having the AED on-site increases access to early defibrillation and could help save lives."

According to a library press release, sudden cardiac arrest claims the lives of at least 250,000 people annually. The only known treatment for sudden cardiac arrest is the use of a defibrillator and survival rates are less than 2 percent when defibrillation is delayed 10 minutes or more.

"The library has between 1,500 and 2,000 visitors each day and we want to provide a heart-safe environment," Hage said, adding that because every minute counts, the library is placing the AED in the main library by the information desk.

"Equally important is having trained employees ... who are ready to use AEDs with confidence," Hage said. "Our staff is being trained to use the AED."

Crittenton Hospital's Employee Unlimited Potential group is made up of employees, medical staff and friends who support the hospital through voluntary contributions. Funds raised are used to finance services and equipment that benefit the community and staff.

