Star Bulletin

PRINT THIS

Click to Print

SAVE THIS | EMAIL THIS | Close

MICHAEL JACKSON: 1958 ~ 2009

Jackson's death spurs reminder about need for cardiac training

By Helen Altonn

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Jun 26, 2009

Michael Jackson's death yesterday from cardiac arrest prompted the American Heart Association to urge the public to be prepared for cardiac emergencies.

"Cardiac arrest can happen to anyone, anywhere, any time," said Pam Foster, a registered nurse and heart association trainer in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and automated external defibrillation, which restores normal heart rhythm in cardiac arrest.

"Statistically, it happens 1,000 times a day in our country," said Foster, owner of the AED Institute. "Unfortunately, the only time it comes to public knowledge is when it's a celebrity," she said, such as Tim Russert, NBC News' Washington bureau chief and "Meet the Press" moderator, who had died after cardiac arrest at work a year ago, and now Jackson.

Cardiac arrest is the sudden loss of heart function, says the AHA. A heart attack is different, occurring when the blood supply is blocked to part of the heart muscle. Among the many possible causes are heart disease, drugs, blood loss, electrocution, a lack of oxygen or blunt force trauma.

Treatment, whether from a bystander, emergency medical services or the hospital, is usually the same, Foster said, advising people to call 911, start CPR and use a defibrillator if one is available. "Every minute that passes (without treatment) there's 10 percent less chance a person is going to survive."

Foster said 80 percent of cardiac arrests occur at home, at a workplace or somewhere people normally frequent. "But the survival rate still is only 4 to 6 percent because people don't know what to do."

The heart association since 2005 has strongly promoted bystander action, she said. After calling 911, start pushing on the chest to the beat of the Bee Gees' "Stayin' Alive," a technique discovered by Dr. Alson Inaba, pediatric emergency specialist at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children.

Honolulu Airport went from a cardiac survival rate of 1 percent 20 years ago to 80 percent within three years of a CPR/AED program, Foster said. Defibrillators also have been distributed in malls, government offices, schools and many other places, including restaurants, and the cabinets are never locked, Foster pointed out. "Retrieve the AED, turn on the button and it talks to you and tells you exactly what to do."

Brian Eatmon's life was saved after a cardiac arrest in the kitchen at a restaurant about a year ago by the fast action of co-worker Erin Boland, a nursing student. She started CPR, asked the manager to get an AED nearby in the mall, and hooked Eatmon to it. Eatmon is now a CPR instructor for the heart association.

Find this article at:
http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090626_Jacksons_death_spurs_reminder_about_need_for_cardiac_training.html

Click to Print

SAVE THIS | EMAIL THIS | Close

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.