

# School gets portable defibrillator

THE CALIFORNIAN

## After board approves purchase of devices for campuses, Pennsylvania woman who lost son donates first machine

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MURRIETA — During an emotional board meeting last month, trustees agreed to purchase portable defibrillators for its middle and high schools in the wake of the death of a Thompson Middle School boy last summer.

During the meeting in which approval was granted, Rachel Moyer, who lost a son to sudden cardiac arrest, came from Pennsylvania and donated an automated external defibrillator to Thompson.

Moyer was instrumental in getting Pennsylvania to pass a law mandating defibrillators in that state's schools. School nurse Barbara Schuman, who fought to save the Murrieta boy who had collapsed at Thompson and died a month later, accepted the gift on behalf of the campus.

Also during the meeting, Bob Roy, the father of the deceased Thompson student, Travis, presented Murrieta's risk manager John Preston with two donations to be used to purchase defibrillators for the elementary schools. One was \$2,000 from his mother and the other \$500 from Pam Foster, a nurse from Brea who is president of the AED Institute of America.

"This district is taking on a leadership role by establishing a comprehensive (AED) program — the first of its kind in Southwest Riverside County," Roy said in presenting the checks. "It is my hope that as we move forward in our effort to make this a statewide mandate called 'Travis' Law,' that you will be the focus of much positive attention and will be able to serve as a resource of information and a role model for other districts who wish to emulate your program."

Murrieta Valley Unified School District trustees voted unanimously to approve the defibrillator program, which will cost about \$25,000 to start, with undetermined ongoing yearly expenses for training, supplies and administrative costs.

Preston has said Travis' death, and his father's efforts to get defibrillators at Murrieta schools, was the catalyst in bringing the issue to the forefront of the district's agenda. Travis, 14, collapsed in May as he was playing outside at Thompson Middle School's basketball courts and suffered a heart attack due to a previously undiagnosed condition. Travis was also autistic.

Roy said he believes that if an automated external defibrillator had been available at Thompson, his son could have survived. The devices can be used by a lay person to monitor a person's heartbeat and determine whether the rhythm is normal. If needed, the machines can deliver electric shocks to restart the heart or correct an irregular heartbeat.

With the aim of preventing further deaths, Roy decided to start an effort to get legislation passed in Sacramento mandating the placement of automated external defibrillators in schools across the state.



**Thompson Middle School nurse Barbara Schuman receives flowers from Bob Roy at a recent school board meeting after she accepted an automated external defibrillator. Schuman was the first responder when Roy's son, Travis, collapsed at school. Travis later succumbed from the heart attack.**  
**DAVID CARLSON / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**