

VALLEY NEWS

Life saved by young boy's death

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Paloma Elementary School teacher Michele Conrad (right) accepts a Heartsaver Hero Award from the American Heart Association Tuesday, June 17, at a TVUSD board meeting.

Travis Roy of Temecula was looking forward to graduating eighth grade with the rest of his classmates before May 20, 2005.

On that day, with graduation only three weeks away, he collapsed at his middle school in Murrieta.

Travis had gone into sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) caused by a previously undiagnosed heart condition.

Taken via life-flight to Children's Hospital in San Diego, Travis spent four weeks in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. After an MRI to ascertain the extent of the damage to his brain, it was discovered he had massive brain cell death and damage, according to his father, Bob Roy.

"Travis was a wonderful kid," said his father and founder of the Travis R. Roy Sudden Cardiac Arrest Fund, also known as The Travis Fund, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) started not long after Travis' death.

Travis had gone 23 minutes without circulation after he collapsed. This caused him to become blind, completely paralyzed and unable to speak, chew or swallow.

He died on June 25, 2005.

It has been three years since his death; however, something good has come of the tragedy. There is a man who is alive because of Travis.

The Travis Fund is responsible for encouraging public schools to place Automated External Defibrillators in their facilities.

According to Bob Roy, the mission is to raise public awareness about SCA, encouraging people to have heart screenings, to learn CPR and place AEDs in California public schools and facilities.

In 2007, the Temecula Valley Unified School District (TVUSD) installed 49 AEDs at all 33 school sites and district facilities.

With the installment of the devices, principals were asked to send at least five staff members to CPR/AED training. Paloma Elementary School principal Sandra McKay opted to train all 45 members of her staff.

In April, those efforts paid off when special education teacher Michele Conrad used her training to save a 65-year-old man who went into cardiac arrest at the gym, according to a press release.

Conrad, who was able to resuscitate the man, said, "Now he refers to me as the woman who broke his heart, because I had to perform the CPR on him."

The TVUSD Governing Board recognized Conrad on June 17 at their regular board meeting.

For her efforts, Bob Roy presented Conrad with an American Heart Association award.

"She was able to learn CPR because we put the AEDs in her school and she went to the training class" said Roy.

According to statistics cited by Roy, more than 325,000 people die each year as a result of SCA. Only an electrical impulse from an AED can restart the heart into a normal rhythm and the survival rate from SCA declines seven to 10 percent each minute without circulation.

Approximately 95 percent of SCA victims die before they reach a hospital.

"People need to learn CPR," said Roy. "Sudden cardiac arrest is the leading cause of death and the most preventable. It's a time critical emergency, because there is a high risk of brain damage after the first few minutes. Getting the heart started again is very important."

For more information on The Travis Fund, visit www.thetravisfund.org or call Bob Roy at (951) 505-0961.