

Region of Peel seeking volunteers for local CPR, first aid initiative

Written By ALYSSA PARKHILL

If you are 18 years of age or older, valid in First Aid and CPR certification with plenty of time available and looking for volunteer work, Region of Peel has just what you need.

Region of Peel is reaching out to the public for on-call community CPR and AED responders.

Volunteers attend mandatory orientation and ongoing education sessions to be able to assist and help people in their community.

Community Responders get notified of cardiac emergencies through an app on their phone allowing the community responder to reach the patient and assist during a cardiac arrest until paramedics are able to arrive.

A Community Responder is anyone that is willing to volunteer their time to help save a life when it is needed. Community Responders are provided with an AED and CPR equipment when they join and a mobile application for their wireless device. They are volunteers with the Region of Peel operating under paramedic services community programs department, explained Paul Snobelen, Specialist of Community Safety Programs for Peel Regional Paramedic Services.

The inspiration for the program came from similar programs that run in the UK and Europe, which have proven results in improving the time management and cardiac arrest management when ambulances have delays.

As paramedic service we wanted to find ways to be more actively involved in the community. Police services have auxiliary units, fire departments have volunteers, and paramedics for years operated in silos. So, we wanted to develop a program that would support the community when it mattered most, cardiac arrest, but also give back to the community by training and developing those who are willing to act to save a life, said Snobelen. So, creating a community responder program allowed us to work directly with members of the community, and members of the community had the opportunity to volunteer with us.

With a constantly enhancing and evolving world with technology and advances, and the help of the community, those who are suffering from a cardiac arrest can get help faster and more efficiently.

In a rural environment it takes time for emergency services to access everyone, so having a community of volunteers can help provide earlier access to CPR/AED. Eventually we will also have the support of the Drone to bring an AED to a scene. All of this is part of our cardiac arrest management strategy, explained Snobelen. In an urban environment this program is also relevant as more and more high-rise buildings are constructed. Both in a rural and urban environment a paramedic might arrive to an address in 6 min, but to access the patient might require driving down a long driveway or elevator. Delaying care. With Community Responders if someone local who is trained can help us facilitate that early access to CPR and AED together we can make a difference.

Volunteers will endure specific training covering the program policy and procedures. With basic CPR and First Aid certificate a prerequisite, the training will introduce oral airways and bag valve masks.

The program reaches out to those in the Peel Region of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon.

Peel Regional Paramedics are confident in the work they do, the training they provide and have one of the best survival rates in the GTA.

In Peel our paramedics are modest. Paramedics themselves have increased their scope of practice, trained and tested in high-performance CPR annually. We have one of the best cardiac arrest management strategies and survival rate in the GTA, and we need to brag about it more, said Snobelen. It's programs like our Public Access Defibrillators, Community Responder, and AED

Drone programs that are going to enhance this even further.?

For more information or if interested in joining the program, please visit peelregion.ca/volunteers.