

AEDASAP

HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS TEAM UP TO KEEP SANTA CRUZ ATHLETES SAFE

BY JAIMIE SIEGLE

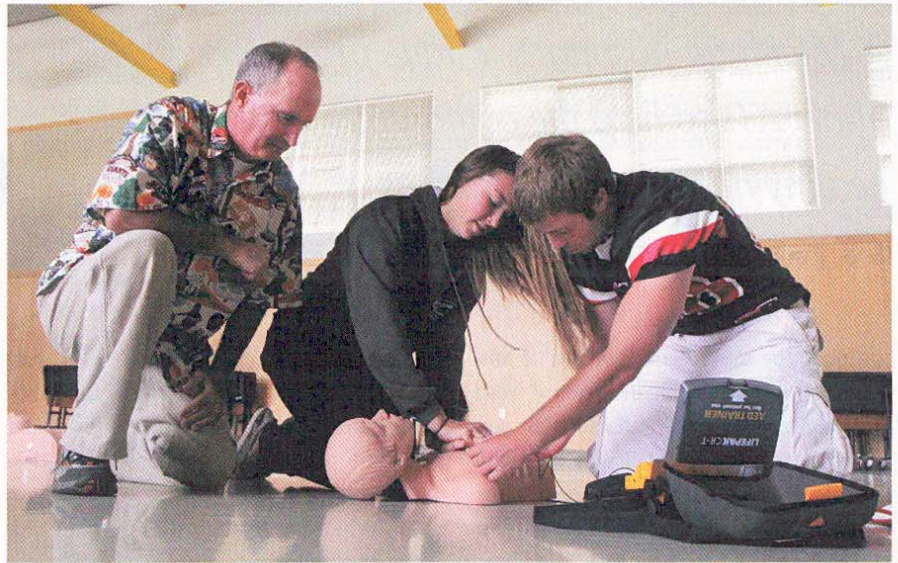
During the 2011 American Medical Society for Sports Medicine Conference, NATA liaison Matt Ryan, MA, ATC, PTA, attended a presentation by Brett Toresdahl, MD, about sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) in high schools. One slide, however, stood out in particular: A graph demonstrating the chances of survival drastically dropping with every minute the victim was without an automated external defibrillator (AED).

"The slide served as a light bulb over my head," Ryan said. "Even though we do EKG testing [on athletes], what would really save lives is having more AEDs on high school campuses. At the end of the school days [the AEDs] are locked up or in nurse's offices, so they're not much help for after-school sports."

Inspired by the presentation, Ryan, the Palo Alto Medical Foundation Santa Cruz's (PAMF) athletic department supervisor and sports medicine program manager, approached Scott Vahradian, head of emergency medicine serves in Santa Cruz County, "as a parent" about the idea of funding AEDs for the local public schools. Together, representing their respective organizations, they created the Save a Student Program. The philanthropic initiative aims to increase the survival rate of SCA victims by donating AEDs to every middle and high school in the county, and seven AEDs will be given to schools' athletic trainers to carry with them at all times, from after school practices to away games.

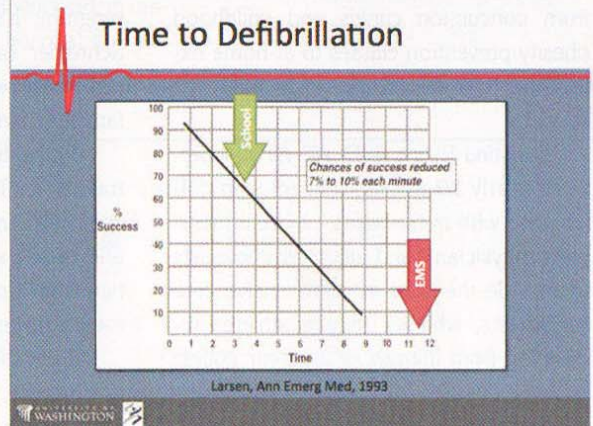
But the donation of the lifesaving devices by PAMF is just the beginning for the Save a Student program.

"To make anything really 'go' you need sustainability," Ryan said. "Scott is going to run the sustainability program by making sure our vendor is contacted



ABOVE: MATT RYAN, MA, ATC, PTA, WORKS WITH TWO STUDENTS DURING AED TRAINING AS PART OF THE "SAVE A STUDENT" PROGRAM.

RIGHT: THIS SLIDE FROM DR. BRETT TORESDAHL'S PRESENTATION INSPIRED MATT RYAN TO CREATE THE "SAVE A STUDENT" PROGRAM.



every time the batteries and pads need to be replaced."

The third body contributing to the program is the County Office of Education, which will provide AED training to any and all students, faculty, staff and coaches in each school district. The class will cover AED basics, as well as spineboarding and CPR. Ryan and EMS employees have already begun teaching. Moving forward, EMS leaders will train anyone at any time, as long as the Save a Student program exists. (PAMF has also donated 10 AED training units to be used at fire stations, where the classes will take place.)

Ryan said since the inception of Save a Student, the program has "really exploded," and hopes PAMF may eventually want to expand the program to cover the whole region.

"Dr. Toresdahl is repeating the study and is coming up with the same results," Ryan said, adding that it was a "no-brainer" not only to supply the AEDs, but to also make them easily accessible in the event of an emergency. "Even if a school has one or two [AEDs] already, we need one at the gym, one at the field, and one at the administration building. It's the location that will save lives."