

THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

HUNNEMAN: A Dad keeps working to save young lives

[BY JOHN HUNNEMAN](#)

November 01, 2013; 06:50 PM

The work he is doing now will save the lives of children he will never meet.

And Bob Roy has no intention of slowing down.

“It’s been my therapy,” said Roy. “It’s all about raising awareness.”

In May of 2005 Travis Roy, Bob’s 14-year-old son, was playing outside at Thompson Middle School in Murrieta when his heart stopped beating and he collapsed on the ground.

The fire department was called and arrived within minutes. Meanwhile the school nurse began performing CPR. For 23 minutes, no blood circulated in Travis’s body.

A defibrillator was eventually used and was able to restart the boy’s heart. Travis was airlifted to Children’s Hospital in San Diego where, after four weeks in a coma, he died.

It was later learned Travis had a congenital heart defect that had gone undiagnosed. However, even with that condition, if an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) had been immediately available, the chance of the youngster’s survival would have been greatly increased.

Several months later, Roy stood before the Murrieta school board, tears in his eyes, and asked trustees to approve funding to place AED’s at each of the district’s campuses.

The funding was approved.

“(Murrieta) really set the gold standard,” Roy told me. “Each high school campus now has three AEDs, the middle schools have two and the elementary schools each have one.”

Seeking to spread the word of the importance of having the defibrillators available, and to honor the memory of his son, Roy founded the Travis R. Roy Sudden Cardiac Arrest Fund (The Travis Fund).

Roy now speaks to school boards and other groups about sudden cardiac arrest and the need to have resources immediately available.

“You need to be able to deploy an AED in less than three minutes,” he said.

Since Travis’s death, “The Travis Fund” has been responsible for the placement of 121 AED’s on school campuses in Temecula, Murrieta, San Jacinto and other regions.

In some cases, school districts and other agencies pay for the equipment. In others, money is raised to purchase the equipment – each AED costs between \$1,500 and \$1,800 – and made available to schools.

Two of the machines were recently donated to Linfield Christian School in Temecula, said Roy.

Here are a few Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) statistics:

SCA in children most often occurs between the ages of 10 and 19. It strikes boys four times more often than girls.

More than 325,000 people die each year as a result of SCA.

The survival rate from SCA declines by seven to 10 percent each minute without circulation.

Brain death begins within four to six minutes after circulation stops.

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

The overall survival rate when an AED is used within the first three to five minutes is 75 percent.

In 2005, the California Legislature passed a resolution recommending all school districts implement AED programs. Roy is hopeful future legislation will require the equipment be placed on every school campus and that a CPR course will become part of graduation requirements.

The Legislature has also declared Sept. 12 -- Travis’s birthday -- to be Sudden Cardiac Awareness Day for all California schools and public agencies.

In addition to the Travis Fund – www.theTravisFund.org – Roy is involved with the Parent Heart Watch, an advocacy and support group concerned with Sudden Cardiac Awareness.

“They really reach out to families who have lost children,” Roy said. “It’s a place where you can laugh and cry and know you are not alone.”

To find out more visit www.parentheartwatch.org.

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