



Hugh Heron Announces Largest Donation of Life-Saving Defibrillators in Public Education History

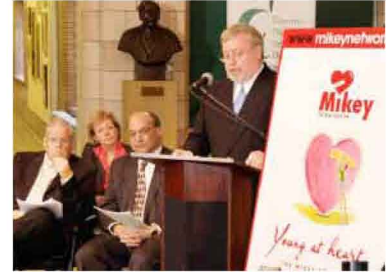
Hugh Heron

President, Heathwood Homes & Co-Founder

TDSB DONATION NEWS CONFERENCE

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Central Technical School, Toronto, Ontario



Good afternoon everyone.

I'm here today to talk about HEART. The human heart. Which sometimes needs help to keep beating when the unexpected happens. AND the emotional heart that inspires acts of kindness.

We're particularly happy at The Mikey Network to donate 120 public-access defibrillators called MIKEYS to Toronto District School Board. This is an opportunity to stress to the city's youth the importance of BOTH kinds of heart.



And this announcement is especially meaningful today, considering the tragic news about the 8 year old boy who collapsed and died yesterday in the stairwell of a Markham elementary school.

The MIKEYS that will be installed in the Board's secondary schools, outdoor education centre and administrative site - including the training to use them - are worth \$400,000 in total. This is the largest donation of public access defibrillators ever made at one time in North America.

In just 4 years, The Mikey Network has committed \$900,000 dollars, which includes placing 300 MIKEYS across the Greater Toronto Area.

And it all began with one man named Mike Salem.

Mike was a partner in Heathwood Homes and Heron Homes. In 2002 on a golf course, he experienced Sudden Cardiac Arrest, and died. His physical heart stopped that day, but Mike's "heart" went far beyond the organ that quit on him. It extended to his kindness, compassion and consideration for everyone – to an unselfish level of giving that moved us all during the years we knew him.

His heart-felt generosity is one of the many reasons we miss Mike as a friend, as well as a colleague. After his death, we thought long and hard about how to honour his memory. We knew that helping others would be a perfect tribute. And the result is The Mikey Network. We founded this non-profit organization in 2003 to educate the public on heart-healthy living, and to place MIKEYS in high-risk public locations.

Each year in Ontario, 6,500 Ontarians experience sudden cardiac arrest – and some of them are children and teens. More than 90 per cent of these people need to have their heart rhythm returned to normal by a defibrillator. Our Emergency Medical Services crews are great, but it takes them an average of 8 minutes to respond to the scene. If the shock from a defibrillator can be delivered within 2 to 6 minutes of the event, it can increase the odds of survival up to 50 per cent.

No one knows for sure whether having a public-access defibrillator on that golf course in 2002 would have saved Mike's life – but in his name, we are offering more people who stop breathing unexpectedly a second chance at living.

We sincerely hope the defibrillators will never be needed – but we also know that these remarkable machines are helping to save lives. Cathy Hall is an example. While attending a conference in Toronto, she experienced pain in her jaw – something that had been bothering her for a couple of days. The pain got worse and she went into the washroom, where she had a heart attack and Sudden Cardiac Arrest. Two women noticed her distress and pressed the panic button. Two OPP officers standing close to the washroom door were able to use a public-access defibrillator to revive Cathy. She had never had heart problems before this incident, and because of it, she has taken steps toward a heart-healthy lifestyle. She is also now certified to use a public-access defibrillator, and she supports the work we do through The Mikey Network.

Today's donation creates an important bridge that will offer people of all ages a second chance at life. And for you students, this sets an important example. Even at your stage of life, you have the opportunity to use your heart in a positive way.

Now, I'd like to ask Chris Bolton and Penny Mustin, Executive Superintendent Employee Services, to join me to receive the official donation.