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17 automated external defibrillators installed at Foothills facilities

LITTLETON, Colo.—Foothills Park & Recreation District has installed 17 automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in facilities throughout the District. AEDs can be used by staff or patrons to treat victims of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). AEDs have now become sophisticated enough to be used by minimally trained users. Many Foothills staff members have attended orientations to become familiar with how the units are used.

“We want to ensure the safety of our customers and staff, and this is a very important way we can fulfill that mission,” said Bob Easton, Foothills Executive Director. “Without AEDs there was nothing we could do for sudden cardiac arrest victims until emergency services arrived. Now we can make the difference between life and death.” Every year, SCA strikes up to 350,000 people in the U.S. alone. Most of them will die, many of them needlessly, Easton said. The units were partially funded by a donation from the Foothills Foundation, enabling the District to purchase AEDs.

SCA is usually caused by an electrical malfunction of the heart called ventricular fibrillation (VF) – an ineffective quivering of the heart muscle that makes it unable to pump blood through the body. Once the blood stops circulating, a person quickly loses consciousness and the ability to breath. Defibrillation is the only definitive treatment for this condition.

Unlike the models of defibrillators intended for use by healthcare professionals, AEDs do not require extensive medical knowledge to understand or operate. The expertise needed to analyze the heart’s electrical function is programmed into the device, enabling non-medical persons to respond to cardiac emergencies.

The HeartStart OnSite AEDs installed at Foothills facilities provide clear voice prompts that instruct the user to attach electrodes and then stay clear while the device analyzes the patient’s heart rhythm. If the AED’s computer algorithm determines the patient’s heart is in a rhythm able to be shocked, the user is again prompted to remain clear of the patient while the defibrillation shock is delivered.

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Foothills Park & Recreation district, founded in 1959, serves a 28 square mile area of unincorporated Jefferson County generally bounded by Hampden Avenue south to C-470 from Sheridan Boulevard west to the Dakota Hogback. The District operates the Ridge Recreation Center, the Edge Ice Arena, Lilley Gulch Recreation Center, the Peak Community and Wellness Center, four outdoor swimming pools, Indoor Sports Arena, Foothills Golf Course complex, Meadows Golf Course, and 69 park sites totaling more than 2,410 acres and including four regional parks, 42 neighborhood and community parks and 24 greenbelts. In addition Foothills manages six regional trail corridors for public use, which, combined with park trails, total more than 31 miles. For more information visit www.ifoohills.org , or call (303) 409-2100.