

# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Be a Lifesaver Tucson Campaign Launches this Week** **Groundbreaking effort aims to train 500,000 Tucsonans to perform CPR** <http://bealifesavertucson.org/3-steps>

Tucson, Ariz---Each day in the United States, almost 1,000 lives are lost to sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). Every 90 seconds, this insidious killer claims another victim. Sudden cardiac arrest is the leading cause of deaths in the United States, taking more lives each year than are lost to lung cancer, breast cancer and AIDS combined. Yet, because there are few warning signs or symptoms to identify people at risk, until SCA hits close to home, most people usually are unaware of its prevalence and the danger that it poses, even to young, seemingly healthy people. While the average age for out-of-hospital cardiac arrest is in the 60s, it often strikes adults in their mid-30s to mid-40s, though it can strike teenagers as well.

“Be A Lifesaver Tucson” is a cooperative effort between the Steven M. Gootter Foundation, the Kaimas Foundation and the University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center. The unique campaign will officially launch on Thursday February 23 at the UA / USC basketball game at McKale Center and continue through the month concluding on Sunday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at the Gootter Grand Slam Charity Tennis Event at the Jim Reffkin Tennis Center at Randolph Park. (A press conference will take place on Feb, 23<sup>rd</sup> prior to the game – location and time tba).

The goal of the month-long initiative is to train over 500,000 Tucsonans on the new Chest-Compression-Only method CPR. Developed by the UA Sarver Heart Center Resuscitation Research Group this method, when used, significantly increases survival rates for SCA victims.

Recent statistics show that this new method is much more accepted and easily learned than previous methods. Studies have shown that many people can be effectively trained by watching a short demonstration video. In order to reach as many people as possible, the Be A Lifesaver Tucson Team has produced a 2-minute demonstration video narrated by Steve Kerr that will be circulated throughout the community via emails, PSAs and word of mouth, directing those interested to <http://bealifesavertucson.org/learn-cpr-steve-kerr> to watch the video. Additionally, for those who prefer to learn in person, training sessions will be offered throughout the month at various times and locations (see website for training schedules).

Presented for the first time by Mayor Jonathan Rothschild at the annual State of the City on February 14, the video was well received by the sold out crowd of 1000 at the event. On Wednesday, February 22, the Tucson City Council will officially proclaim this month-long training as “Be A Lifesaver Tucson Month” and will present a copper letter in recognition of this lifesaving program to the University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center Resuscitation Research Group.

Dr. Karl Kern (one of the developers of this technique) described the potential benefits of Chest-Compression-Only CPR as “If chest-compression-only CPR and other protocols of cardiocerebral resuscitation were implemented nationally an additional 11,000 lives could be saved.”

**Be a Lifesaver Tucson** is committed to ultimately training all Tucsonan’s on this lifesaving CPR. For additional information on Sarver Heart Center visit <http://www.heart.arizona.edu/>; Gootter Grand Slam, <http://www.stevenmgootterfoundation.org> ; Kaimas Foundation, call Ann Charles at 520-977-5161.

Story ideas:

- Sarver Heart Center is doing lifesaving work; creating the new lifesaving CPR method is one of many areas of research being done at the Center
- Local Survivors and victims’ families of SCA – there are many stories in Tucson
- A community Story – how 4 women came together to fight SCA
- How watching a 2-minute video might help you save a life

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