



NEWS RELEASE

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DEFIBS4DOORCOUNTY CAMPAIGN EXCEEDS GOAL, HIGHLIGHTS COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR INCREASED ACCESS TO CRITICAL LIFE-SAVING DEVICES

84 New AEDs Double County's Inventory

Door County, WI, October 24, 2022 – The Door County Fire Chiefs Association's [Defibs4DoorCounty campaign](#) raised \$79,898, enough, when combined with a \$75,000 challenge grant from an anonymous donor, to add 84 new automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) to the county and help save lives.

"The committed and compassionate people of Door County stepped up and helped make a difference through their generous donations," said Chris Hecht, president of the Door County Fire Chiefs Association. "We beat our fundraising goal and the campaign's messages about AED's life-saving benefits and ease of use, even by non-professionally trained bystanders, were well received. The community responded with an outpouring of support and increased interest in AEDs."

The campaign, which launched in February and ran through Labor Day, offered AEDs free of charge to qualifying government agencies and organizations that agreed to cover annual maintenance costs and other guidelines. The 84 new AEDs double the county's inventory prior to the campaign launch, according to Hecht.

New AEDs Distributed Throughout County

Most of the new AEDs (63 units) are for government agencies, including law enforcement, fire departments, EMS and DNR agents. The remaining 21 are for community organizations with high-traffic locations where people work, play or gather in Door County, i.e., schools, churches, museums, marinas, performing arts venues.

"Although we cannot fill all the requests, we have greatly increased access to AEDs across the county's nearly 2,400 square miles," Hecht said. More than 120 AEDs were requested during the campaign.

The AEDs provided by the campaign cost an average of \$1,800 per unit and are the Lifepak 1000, primarily used by first responders, and CR2 models. All units are compatible with the Door County EMS system and can be registered on the [PulsePoint AED app](#) to assist bystanders and emergency responders in finding the closest available community AED.

Real-World AED Life Saving Event

The life-saving benefit of access to an AED was underscored in August when Defibs4DoorCounty campaign coordinator and local EMS volunteer Carol Forner responded to a 9-1-1 dispatch for a medical incident near her Gills Rock home. The

patient, a 59-year-old female, seasonal resident of Gills Rock, was riding in a vehicle along Highway 42 near Weborg Dock with her husband and friends when she experienced concerning symptoms and lost consciousness.

Forner, who keeps an AED in her personal vehicle like many of the county's first responders, was at the scene within three minutes and administered defibrillation quickly. By the time an ambulance arrived, the patient had a strong pulse and good vital signs. She has since recovered from what could have been a fatal event as it was confirmed by hospital staff that she suffered ventricular fibrillation resulting in cardiac arrest.

"In that moment, my adrenalin kicked in and I focused on the emergency at hand," Forner said. "It wasn't until the patient was in the ambulance on her way to the hospital that the weight of the experience hit me – I was hit with a wave of gratitude. Gratitude for what was looking like a positive outcome for the patient and for the tools that helped me. It was the first time I needed to use an AED on a patient," Forner added.

More than 356,000 people experience [out-of-hospital cardiac arrest](#) (OHCA) in the U.S. each year. For every minute that passes without CPR and defibrillation, the [chances of survival decrease 7-10%](#). About 9 out of 10 people who suffer OHCA die. CPR, especially if performed immediately, can [double or triple a cardiac arrest victim's chance of survival](#).

Community Support Key To Campaign's Success

To help raise awareness and drive campaign donations, Defibs4DoorCounty aligned with numerous sponsors and partners, including Nicolet Bank, North Shore Bank, Door County Medical Center, The YMCA, Door County North, Sister Bay Advancement Association, Jimmy John's of Sturgeon Bay, Compress & Shock Foundation, Tent Show Troubadours and Al Johnson's. Several area businesses and organizations also made generous cash donations to the campaign.

"Through their support of the campaign, community leaders echoed the importance of access to AEDs, especially in a rural community like Door County that attracts more than 2 million visitors a year, hosts numerous large public events and where nearly 4 in 10 people who live here year-round are [60 or older](#)," Hecht said.

Helpings Save Lives Is Ongoing Effort

Even though the Defibs4DoorCounty campaign has ended, organizations interested in buying AEDs can take advantage of the county's bulk-purchasing agreement by contacting local fire departments.

Door County Fire Chiefs Association also encourages people to consider how they might be an active bystander to a public safety incident such as an OHCA. Three actions to consider are:

- Registering for a local CPR and AED training class
- Noticing if/where AEDs are in the places they visit often
- Learning the [signs of someone experiencing cardiac arrest](#)

AED and CPR training is available for a nominal fee throughout the year from the [Sister Bay & Liberty Grove Fire Department](#).

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The Door County Fire Chiefs Association works to improve fire safety, education and prevention through partnership and cooperation with organizations throughout the county. The 13-member organization represents 10 fire department and three EMR agencies.