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Community collaboration funds AED unit for BHS gym

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Amy Moss Strong, Bandon Western World

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BANDON — This past fall, Coast Community Health Center had the opportunity to provide sports physicals and drug testing services for Bandon schools. It was during one of these drug testing sessions that Bandon High School Athletic Director Brandon Standridge approached Coast Community Health Outreach Worker Helen Thompson, to let her know of the high school's need for an automatic external defibrillator in the high school gym.

Standridge went on to explain that most every building on the campus, if not all, have an AED except for the high school gym, also known as Otis K. Murray Court. And yet, the gym has the most flow of people through it of all ages, due to sports, concerts, meetings and more.

Deeply concerned, Thompson asked that Standridge email her a letter of request detailing the need, and told him she'd keep an eye open for opportunities to obtain an AED, whether through small grant funding or donations.

Thompson moved Bandon High's request up to CCHC Executive Director Linda Maxon, sharing Standridge's letter with her. Maxon lent her support for the AED project, and said that as medical professionals, they of all people see just how vital and potentially life-saving one small piece of equipment can be.

"Although it's housed in the school gym, it really belongs to the community at large, as so many from within our community, and even without, attend the various functions held in the gym and sports field/track," Thompson said.

Maxon secured special pricing for the AED through the product's CCHC representative in order to keep the cost down for BHS, and offered to donate funds on behalf of CCHC to help acquire it.

Thompson, who is a Bandon By-The-Sea Kiwanis member, brought the AED project to her local group. Bandon Kiwanians were generous, and various members pledged their financial support as well as a donation by the Bandon By-The-Sea Kiwanis Organization. That day they raised more than half of the \$1,400 cost of the AED.

“This is one of the many ways CCHC is reaching out to build health and wellness in the community,” Maxon said.

In the weeks that followed, Thompson, together with Bandon Kiwanis president Kelley Basey, continued to get the word out that more donations were still needed to make the purchase. Additional donors stepped up to fill the gap, including a few more Bandon Kiwanis members, The Bay Area Kiwanis Organization and Coast Community Health Center.

The AED, a high-quality and highly technical piece of medical equipment designed for all ages from infants to the elderly, was purchased and delivered to Coast Community Health Center, and handed off to Standridge and Bandon High School just after the holidays. It is now installed at the BHS gym, available for emergencies as needed.

“This is such a great example of true community partnership, giving and care for one another,” Thompson said.

AED project sponsors include: Coast Community Health Center, Bandon By-The-Sea Kiwanis, Bay Area Kiwanis, Barrett Business Services Incorporated, Roto-Rooter, Red Harvest Farm, Banner Bank and Bob and Rheta Thompson.

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