



Community rallies, raises funds for AEDs

New Berlin Police Department, New Berlin, Wisconsin

Challenge

Find a way to purchase three new AEDs amidst an economic downturn and despite city budget cuts, depleted grants and repeated denials for federal funds.

Solution

A community-wide AED fundraising campaign: the New Berlin Police Department received enough funds to purchase a total of 22 Philips HeartStart FRx Defibrillators.

Located in Southeastern Wisconsin, the city of New Berlin is a tight-knit community of approximately 40,000 residents. Tucked between Milwaukee and Madison, the bedroom community was ranked #34 in CNN Money Magazine's Top 100 List of Best Small American Towns in which to Live (2009). Helping to ensure that the city maintain its position, the New Berlin Police Department (NBPD) and its 74 officers take the charge to serve and protect to heart. When lack of funding threatened the department's ability to replace an aging fleet of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), Police Chief Joe Rieder turned to an alternative approach.

Making a case for AEDs

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is a leading cause of death in the United States¹. It is often brought on by ventricular fibrillation, a condition in which the heart's electrical activity malfunctions. SCA can happen to anyone at anytime, anywhere. For the best chance of survival from the most common cause of SCA, a shock from a defibrillator should be delivered within the first few minutes of collapse.² "Up until the 1990s, our department supplemented our volunteer fire department staff. As a result, our officers were required to maintain certification in CPR and on AED use," says Chief Rieder. "We came to rely on AEDs and the peace of mind that comes from

knowing you have the equipment needed to respond to a cardiac event. However, at the end of 2008, the department had three working AEDs, 17 squad cars, and not enough funds to purchase additional units. We needed help."

Championing the cause

Enter Jeanne Bartol. Growing up, Jeanne had dreamed of a career in law enforcement. But her life took her in other directions, including a 30-year career in the medical field. After a car accident in 2002 left her with debilitating injuries, Jeanne emerged with a new sense of purpose. "I realized my life had been spared so that I could help others," says Jeanne. So she combined her medical expertise and her passion for police work with a desire to "Pay it Forward". "I started my volunteer fundraising efforts with the local SWAT Team," says Jeanne. "After raising \$16,000 for tactical medical, SWAT and K-9 equipment, I turned my attention to our operational patrol needs. I approached Chief Rieder and asked if I could help him with any equipment acquisition needs. He said he was down to three working AEDs and was having trouble finding the funds to purchase more. I told him I would get back to him."

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“I was really skeptical when Jeanne said she could raise the funds we needed for the AEDs,” recalls Chief Rieder. “We were in the middle of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Jeanne wanted to help and we needed help. In less than 24 hours she had a list of funding sources.” Pursuing the traditional route, the Chief approached the City and was told that there was no room in the budget for AEDs. “The economic situation had caused everyone to rethink and revise their spending plans,” notes Jeanne. “We didn’t qualify for large company grant programs and we were repeatedly denied federal and private funding.” After a year of rejections, Jeanne knew it was time to take an unconventional approach to raise the money needed for the AEDs. “I had a contact at one of the local television stations who agreed to air our plight if I got buy-in from the Chief,” says Jeanne. “It took some convincing but he finally agreed.”

Speaking from the heart

Chief Rieder gave Jeanne the go ahead to contact the media on a Friday in June, 2009. The following Sunday, a man in a town just north of New Berlin suffered SCA at a golf course. He was saved by a police officer who happened to have an AED in his squad car. As fate would have it, that story aired during the Sunday night news. The NBPD newscast ran on Monday night. “Our message was simple and from the heart,” says Jeanne. “We shared how the economic crisis had affected our ability to secure government and private funding for the much needed AED units,” says Jeanne. “We asked the community to step up, to give what they could, and to drop off their donations at the police department.”



Making a case for funding Law Enforcement AED programs

According to the American Heart Association, the chances of surviving Sudden Cardiac Arrest are reduced by seven to ten percent with every minute that passes without CPR and defibrillation³. In cities where defibrillation is provided within five to seven minutes, the survival rate is as high as 45 percent⁴.

Chief Rieder realizes that not all cities are as progressive as New Berlin when it comes to implementing an AED program and notes that many city governments are reluctant to fund AEDs for police because they say it’s not a law enforcement function. “They look at us as crime fighters, but we’re much more than that,” says Chief Rieder.

“Our officers are out patrolling at all hours of the day and night. Barring weather problems, our response time is one to three minutes, which often puts us first on the scene. In an emergency situation, it’s imperative that we have all the tools we need to do what we can to save a person’s life – or at least stabilize him until additional help arrives.” Chief Rieder continues, “Ultimately the person experiencing a cardiac event doesn’t care who saves him, he just wants to be saved. Funding an AED program is not about one organization versus another. It’s about saving a life. A responsibility we all share.”

In less than 24 hours, Chief Rieder received the first donation. “There was a check in my mailbox from an anonymous donor – enough to cover the cost of one new AED. From that point forward, the money kept coming in; one gentleman came in with \$100 one month and came back the following month with another \$100, saying that was all he could spare. I am still astounded and humbled by the outpouring of support.”

Jeanne knew the community she calls home would stand up and do what they could to potentially save a life. “We kicked off our official fundraising campaign during the New Berlin

4th of July celebration. A follow-up newscast in September spurred local civic groups to sponsor fundraising events, local businesses designated certain days where they would donate a percentage of that day’s sales, and individuals gave what they could,” says Jeanne.

Joe Harker, a resident of New Berlin and the Deputy Grand Master of The Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons of Wisconsin was reading the local paper when he ran across an article detailing the NBPD’s AED fundraising drive and how they were still short of reaching their goal. He immediately picked up the phone and called the police department.

“It’s comforting to know that our officers are out patrolling the streets with an AED in their squad cars. That said, I hope they never have cause to show up at my house.”

Joe Harker, Deputy Grand Master, The Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons of Wisconsin



David Gelfund demonstrates the Philips HeartStart FRx Defibrillators to NBPD staff, including Officers Troy Hendriksen, Chris Lamm, and Phil Kiedrowski; Dispatcher Steve Litwicki; and Auxiliary Officer and Fundraising Chair Jeanne Bartol.



Jeanne Bartol happily accepts a personal check from local pharmacist, James R. Ziller, PharmD, who donated the full cost of one AED.

“I asked how the Masons could help,” recalls Joe, “and I was told that the person I needed to talk with was gone for the day, but that he would return my call on Monday. Well, a few minutes later, the phone rang and it was Chief Rieder.” Ultimately, the Wisconsin Masonic Foundation, through its matching funds program, presented Chief Rieder and Jeanne with a check for \$2,400. According to William Barnes, Director of Development, Wisconsin Masonic Charities, The Wisconsin Masonic Foundation has helped place more than 630 AEDs throughout Wisconsin. “We have placed AEDs in 58 percent of the high schools, in retirement homes, in ice skating rinks, and so on – combined we have made gifts of \$1.3 million toward the purchase of AEDs.” William continues, “The Masons understand the critical role AEDs play when it comes to saving a life. To date, we know of 11 confirmed saves using the AEDs we helped fund. We are thrilled to have had a hand in that kind of success and in the success of the New Berlin Police Department’s campaign.”

Within three months of initiating its community-wide outreach fundraising campaign, NBPD had received \$40,000 – enough money to purchase 22 AED units.

Choosing the right AED

Chief Rieder had decided to order the same AED units that the department had used for years. “I made an administrative decision based on our experience and comfort level with the existing units. Then I got a call from Jeanne asking me to reconsider that decision.” Jeanne explains, “I was training for my volunteer position and we were certifying in CPR, AED training. I had just finished 10 minutes of grueling CPR when it hit me that we had made the wrong equipment decision. I went home and spent the next 12 hours researching our options. I made calls to other law enforcement agencies with AED programs, fire departments, clinics, ambulance services, and talked with several major hospitals to see what they were using. My search led me to the Philips HeartStart FRx AED.”

Responding with confidence

Jeanne says the Chief agreed to consider the Philips AED despite having already placed an order for another vendor’s units. “The Chief and I called our Philips representative on Sunday night. He came in on Monday morning and did a side-by-side comparison of the model we had already chosen versus

the Philips HeartStart FRx AED,” says Jeanne. “Long story short, we cancelled our original plans and ordered the Philips HeartStart FRx.”

Chief Rieder and his officers were immediately impressed with the Philips product. “Compared to the other unit, the Philips AED is much lighter and its bright red case makes it easier to see and grab. More importantly, the system is easy to use and features an infant/child key which gives our officers the added assurance that the AED is appropriate for infants and children as well as an adult.” Chief Rieder says the Philips unit also allayed the officers’ fears that they may forget how to do CPR. “With this unit the officer simply pushes a button and it walks them through each step of the CPR process. When you get into a high stress event, this kind of step-by-step, comprehensive approach to performing these techniques that could save a life is critical. Our officers now have the ability to respond to a cardiac event and thereby the potential to save lives when the call comes.”



Through its matching grants program, the Wisconsin Masonic Foundation presents a check to NBPD for \$2,400. Pictured left to right: Joe Harker, Deputy Grand Master, The Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons of Wisconsin, Chief Rieder, Jeanne Bartol, Gary Beier, President, Wisconsin Masonic Foundation, Shane Beecraft, Worshipful Master Waukesha Masonic Lodge #37, Waukesha, Wisconsin, and William Barnes, Director of Development, Wisconsin Masonic Charities.

Exceeding expectations

Jeanne was the catalyst for this entire effort,” says Chief Rieder. “She championed the cause and never lost sight of our goal. However, it was the individual and group donors who allowed us to place an AED in each one of our 17 squad cars. Without supporters like the Wisconsin Masonic Foundation, our public safety building would not have four units placed in high-risk areas and we would not have a dedicated mobile unit for tactical responses.” Chief Rieder continues, “Everyone who donated to our AED program has played a role in protecting the lives of thousands of people in our community who, statistically speaking, will fall victim to Sudden Cardiac Arrest.”

When asked what he would tell other police departments looking to fund an AED program in an economic downturn, Chief Rieder says keep an open mind. “Law enforcement agencies are, by nature, guarded and suspect of new and different ideas. We opened our door to Jeanne who in turn opened our



Raising enough funds to equip each of its 17 squad cars with a Philips HeartStart FRx Defibrillator, the NBPD also has one unit dedicated to tactical and training events and four units placed in high-risk areas throughout the public safety building and jail.

minds to community involvement. Because we were willing to try something new, residents and visitors alike feel secure knowing that should they suffer a cardiac event in New Berlin, our officers will respond with confidence.”

To learn more about Philips HeartStart Defibrillators and how to incorporate an early defibrillation program into your organization’s safety program, visit www.philips.com/lawenforcement, or call 800-453-6860.

- 1 <http://www.heartrhythmfoundation.org/facts/scd.asp#2>. Retrieved 02 February 2010.
- 2 Cummins R.O., et al. Improving survival from sudden cardiac arrest: The ‘Chain of Survival’ concept. A statement for health professionals from the Advanced Cardiac Life Support Subcommittee and the Emergency Cardiac Care Committee, American Heart Association. *Circulation* 1991; 83:1832-1847.
- 3 American Heart Association. Cardiac arrest: AHA recommendation. Available at: <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4481>. Retrieved 02 February 2010.
- 4 American Heart Association. Cardiac arrest: AHA recommendation. Available at: <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4481>. Retrieved 02 February 2010.

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