

**Eagle Rock Volunteer Rescue Squad
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Second Lifesaving Device Donated to Area Church

A program spearheaded by the Eagle Rock Volunteer Rescue Squad has led to a second generous donation by a Botetourt resident, which could help to save lives in the county.

As reported in the Fincastle *Herald* in _____, an anonymous donor provided funds to purchase an automatic external defibrillator (AED) for King Memorial Church in Oriskany, following a CPR training program conducted there. After reading that article, a second anonymous donor recently came forward with the money to purchase a unit for Galatia Presbyterian Church in the Gala community. The new AED was presented to Galatia pastor Robert MacRae by Eagle Rock captain Georgia Knighton at a recent CPR training held at the church. “We are extremely grateful to the person who saw a need here and made such generous donation—just to help, not for public acclaim,” MacRae said. “In our rural area, it just makes a lot of sense to have one of these devices in the church.”

This result is very rewarding to squad members. “Because of our remote setting and the resulting long distances and times for our ambulances to reach patients, our squad has started this community education program to attempt to train as many community members as possible in CPR,” said Jack Lewis, training officer at the Eagle Rock squad. “AEDs are introduced as part of that training. They are certainly one of the modern medical miracles. They can restore heart function—restart the heart—during a cardiac emergency. And today’s AEDs are so easy to use and are virtually foolproof. You don’t need extensive training to use them.”

In the process of researching the course material, Lewis found out that Zoll, one of the leading manufacturers of AEDs, has a special program for churches that allows them to purchase Zoll’s lifesaving units at a deeply discounted price (about \$1000, half the normal price). “That has given us the idea of trying to raise funds to purchase as many of the units as possible for area churches, and train church members on them,” he said, “so they won’t be timid about using the devices in the event of a cardiac emergency. I was so surprised and grateful when the first donor made it possible to get an AED in Oriskany. And now this one for Galatia is like a domino effect. We do have a couple of other donors coming forward as well. We sure hope this trend continues.”

According to statistics, the leading cause of death in the United States is cardiac arrest, and the leading cause of cardiac arrest is ventricular fibrillation. That's what an AED—a defibrillator—is designed to correct.

“In ventricular fibrillation, the heart’s electrical signals go haywire,” said Captain Georgia Knighton. “An AED can deliver a shock that essentially restarts these electrical signals. However, an AED must be used within minutes of a cardiac emergency in order to be effective. Along with prompt CPR, these devices can give a cardiac arrest victim at least a fighting chance of survival. That’s why we feel this CPR training and AED program is so crucial for our service area, to improve chances of surviving cardiac arrest.”

As a member of Galatia Presbyterian, Knighton was especially gratified by the AED donation to her home church, and by those church members who came forward to take the training. “We are so grateful to these donors, who give of both money and time, to possibly help save a life of a friend or neighbor. We do carry AEDs on our ambulances, of course, but if it takes us some time to get to the patient, which it often does in our location, then chances of survival of cardiac arrest are greatly reduced.”

If your church or other organization is interested in sponsoring a CPR class along with AED demonstration and training, contact Jack Lewis at jwlewis@ervrs.org or 567-2000. The service is free to the public.

[For a high-resolution photo, go to the Eagle Rock Rescue Squad website at www.ervrs.org and click on the Press button on the left. Instructions for downloading the photo are provided. Photo caption below.]

[caption] Georgia Knighton, captain of the Eagle Rock Volunteer Rescue Squad, presents a new Zoll AED to Robert MacRae, pastor of Galatia Presbyterian Church in Gala. The AED was purchased through a special program administered by Zoll to provide defibrillators to churches at discounted prices. Money for the purchase was donated by a Galatia church member who wishes to remain anonymous.