OVERVIEW
Cardiac arrest is a leading cause of death, with nearly 326,200 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occurring each year in the United States. It strikes suddenly and without warning, and what happens within the first few minutes can mean the difference between life and death. Immediate CPR can double or even triple the chances of survival.

By training more lay persons in CPR, more people will be prepared to intervene and take action until medical professionals arrive. Teaching CPR in the school setting is common throughout the United States, and several states have passed legislation requiring it as part of the high school curriculum. It provides students with the skills and confidence necessary to perform CPR, ultimately making our communities safer and empowering our youth to save lives.

SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST
Cardiac arrest occurs when the heart malfunctions and stops beating unexpectedly. It happens suddenly and without warning. With its pumping action disrupted, the heart cannot pump blood to the brain, lungs and other organs. Death occurs within minutes if the victim does not receive treatment.

Cardiac arrest is different from a heart attack, which is caused when blood flow to the heart is blocked. While different from cardiac arrest, serious heart attacks can cause a person to go into cardiac arrest.

SURVIVING CARDIAC ARREST
Surviving a cardiac arrest requires immediate bystander CPR followed by the timely use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). For every minute without CPR, survival from witnessed cardiac arrest decreases 7-10 percent. With EMS response times exceeding 10 minutes in many areas of Wisconsin, the need for trained bystanders is even greater.

Survival rates are dismal, around 11%, often because the person who witnesses the arrest is not trained to provide CPR. On average, only 45.9% of witnessed cardiac arrests receive CPR from a bystander, prior to EMS arrival.

In Milwaukee County in 2013, 778 people suffered a cardiac arrest and only 10.2% survived. Evidence shows that CPR initiated promptly by a bystander can double or even triple the chances of survival.

CPR TRAINING IN THE CLASSROOM
Schools present an opportunity to teach young people how to respond to cardiac arrests. In less than the time it takes to watch a 30-minute sitcom, we can give students the skills they need to help save someone’s life with CPR. CPR training empowers our youth, giving them the training they need to be lifesavers.

As of September 19, 2015, 26 states have passed legislation ensuring all students are trained in basic CPR prior to high school graduation. As a result, these states add over 1 million lifesavers to their local communities each year.

CURRENT PRACTICE IN WISCONSIN
Many schools in Wisconsin already provide CPR training to students. Some offer it as part of...
Physical Education and others offer during the Health curriculum. Some team up with the local Fire/EMS agency while others have their own trainers and equipment.

“Training our students in CPR prepares them to help others in their time of need. It’s easy to incorporate into the school day, and the students love the interactive nature of the training.”— Mrs. Angela Hutchinson, Department Chair; Physical Education & Health Instructor, Divine Savior Holy Angels, Milwaukee

“Providing high school students with life-saving techniques such as CPR allows them to confidently walk out into our communities and be prepared should a situation arise. Through classroom CPR training, students recognize the importance that a life could be saved by their efforts. The in-class training is easy, efficient and effective.”— Brooke Trettin, Health & Physical Education Instructor, Hayward High School

ETHAN’S STORY
(March 12, 2015) It was a day like any other day. Ethan Kariger, a 15-year-old student at D.C. Everest High School, was walking with his friends through Gaska Park in Rothschild, Wisconsin. A man, around 50 years old, passed the boys on his bike. A few seconds later they heard a crash.

The boys rushed to check on the man. Initially he was responsive, but quickly began having difficulty breathing and his eyes rolled back in his head. One of Ethan’s friends dialed 9-1-1. Ethan began performing CPR, which he learned the summer before while working at the community pool.

The biker survived the incident, in part because of the quick actions of Ethan and his friends. The boys have been recognized by the Rothschild Police and Fire Departments and the victim’s family calls the three boys “heroes”. Additionally, the Wisconsin State Assembly presented each of the three boys, Ethan, Jakob and Hunter, with a Hometown Hero Award.

“I hoped I’d never have to put my CPR skills to use, but that day in the park I was thankful I knew exactly what to do.”— Ethan Kariger.

“My family and I are so thankful that these three young men not only had CPR knowledge, but also had the training and ability to be able to put it into action. Without them, I know I would not be here today.”— Dan Christianson, survivor

THE AHA ADVOCATES
Sudden cardiac arrest is deadly and no one sees it coming. To make our communities safer and ultimately increase survival rates from cardiac arrest, we must train more lay people in CPR.

The American Heart Association advocates for all student to be trained in basic CPR prior to high school graduation. We want every youth to be trained and prepared to respond, just as Ethan did.

References:
1.) http://county.milwaukee.gov/EMS/statisticsandreports.htm; accessed 5/7/15