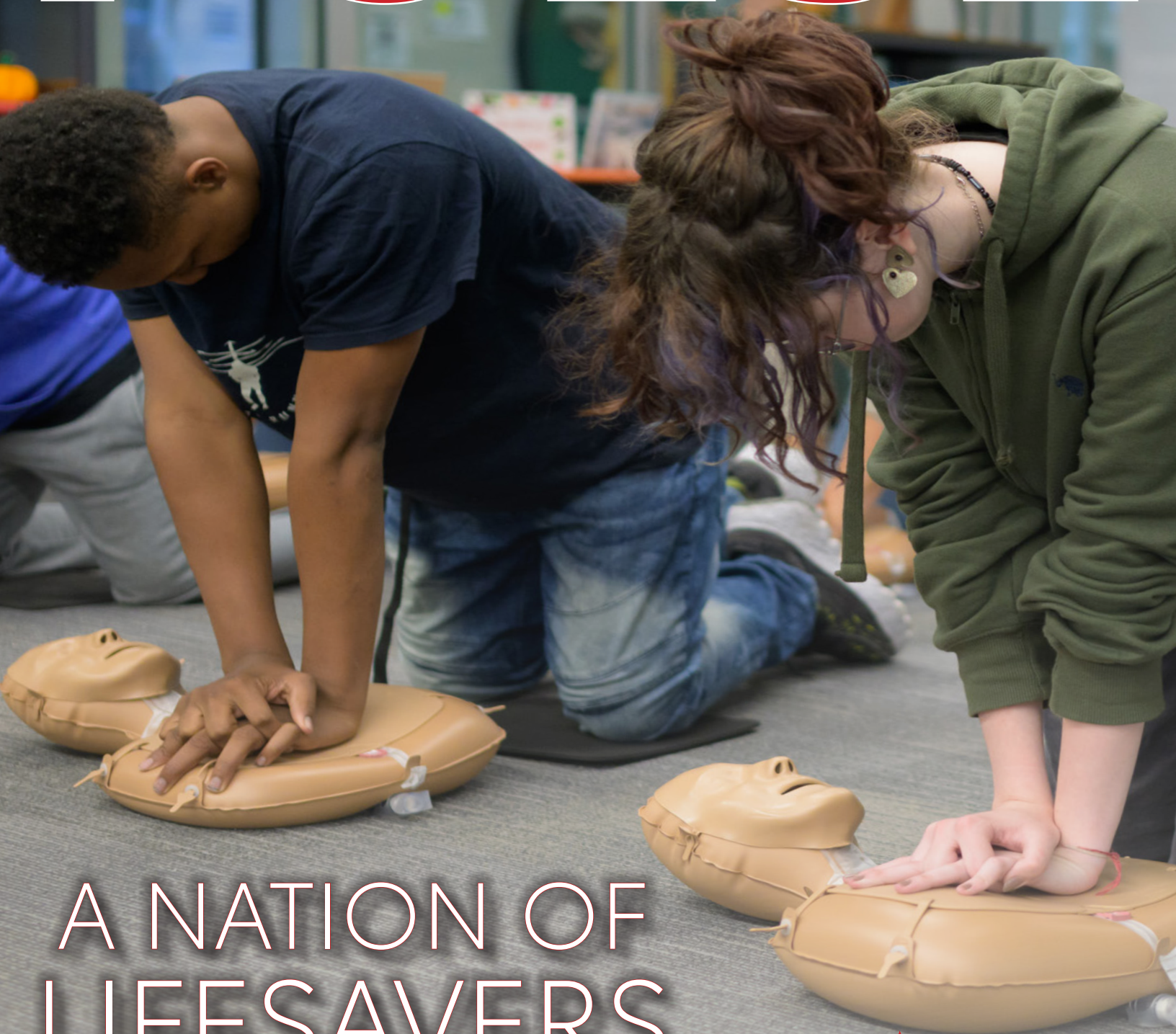


THE PULSE



A NATION OF
LIFESAVERS



American Heart Association
Cor Vitae Society

FROM THE CEO



February marked the first American Heart Month of the American Heart Association's second century as we united around our Nation of Lifesavers™ movement to double cardiac arrest survival rates by 2030.

Thanks to our global community of volunteers, donors and staff, that goal is within reach. Your support powered consumer awareness campaigns, community CPR/AED trainings across the country and historic advocacy wins, including the HEARTS Act.

Now, data from a Decision Analyst survey conducted on behalf of the Association show that bystander confidence in performing CPR has increased from 33% to 39%.

That's 17.7 million more people who feel prepared to act in a cardiac emergency since 2023, when Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin collapsed during *Monday Night Football*.

Our Nation of Lifesavers movement that followed Damar's remarkable recovery and return to football changed the trajectory.

The call to join the movement was threaded throughout American Heart Month — from kickoff events in New York City to activations in communities across the country.

That call to action continues: Join the Nation of Lifesavers. Be Ready. Learn CPR. The life you save could be someone you love.

With heart,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy A. Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

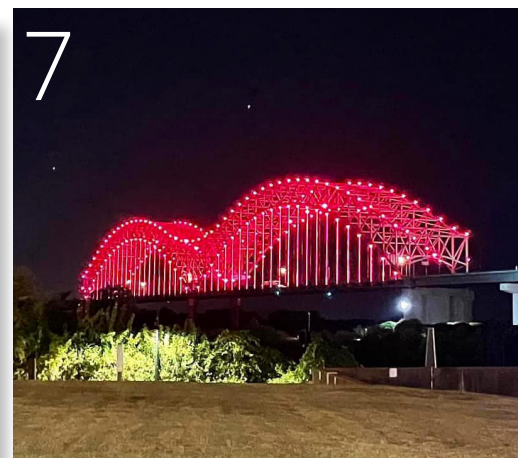
Nancy Brown

Chief Executive Officer, American Heart Association
Member, Cor Vitae Society



CONTENTS

- 4 **ONE SOCIETY,
ENDLESS IMPACT**
Welcoming the Paul Dudley
White Legacy Circle into the
Cor Vitae Society
- 6 **GOWNS AND TOWNS
GO RED**
Moments from the Red Dress
Collection® Concert and
American Heart Month
- 8 **GAME-CHANGER**
CPR hits Super Bowl LIX
- 10 **THE BREATH OF LIFE**
A fascinating history of CPR
- 14 **BUILDING A NATION
OF LIFESAVERS**
How this dynamic nationwide
initiative is saving lives
- 18 **INSIDE INTERVIEW**
Sitting down with the AHA's
Vice President of Nation of
Lifesavers, Amber Baker
- 20 **IGNITING A COMMUNITY**
This Cor Vitae Society member
is transforming Cleveland
neighborhoods
- 22 **LIFE-SAVING LESSONS**
Ensuring high school students
learn CPR before graduation
- 24 **HEARTS ON THE HILL**
AHA's advocacy efforts have
helped pass the HEARTS Act
- 26 **A MOTHER'S LEGACY**
Leaving a legacy gift to the AHA
was easier than this mom ever
imagined



ONE SOCIETY. ENDLESS IMPACT.

WELCOMING THE PAUL DUDLEY WHITE LEGACY CIRCLE INTO THE COR VITAE SOCIETY

Paul Dudley White, a pioneering cardiologist and founding member of the American Heart Association, devoted his life to advancing heart health. A champion of prevention, education, and groundbreaking research, Dr. White's vision for better outcomes and treatments for cardiovascular disease helped shape the Association into a world-renowned leader. His legacy continues to inspire those dedicated to creating a healthier, brighter future for everyone, everywhere.

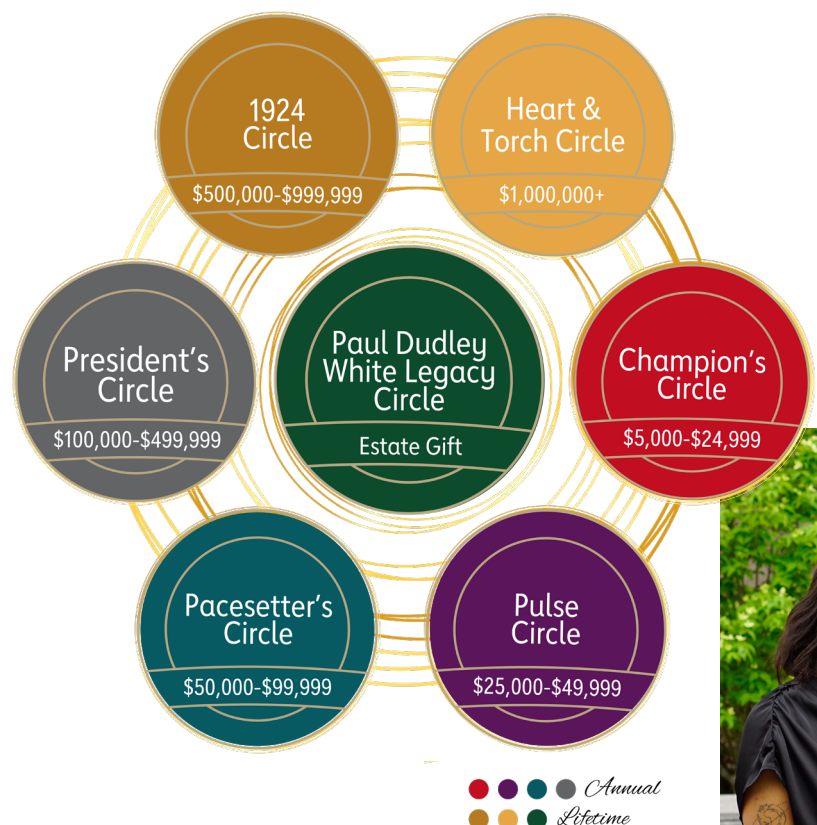
Today, that legacy takes on new meaning as the former Paul Dudley White Legacy Society has officially become part of the Cor Vitae Society as the Paul Dudley White Legacy Circle, a cornerstone of our unified and dynamic donor community. This transition underscores the deep connection between legacy giving and our shared, ongoing mission to advance heart health for all.

The Paul Dudley White Legacy Circle continues to recognize individuals who have made the extraordinary commitment of including the American Heart Association in their will or estate plan, intertwining their own personal legacy with the future of heart and brain health.



The Cor Vitae Society—Latin for “heart of life”—now honors donors across all stages of giving, recognizing annual, lifetime and legacy commitments. By uniting these dedicated supporters, the Cor Vitae Society creates a vibrant tapestry of shared values and a collective vision for lasting impact.

We are profoundly grateful to all our members, whose passion and dedication continue to propel our mission forward. Together, this unified community will continue to inspire hope, change lives and bring us closer to a world free of heart disease and stroke. Visit Heart.org/CorVitae.





HISTORIC VISIONARIES OF THE PAST ARE INTERWOVEN WITH THE STORIES, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY OF TODAY, CREATING A FABRIC OF SHARED VALUES AND ENDURING IMPACT, BINDING TOGETHER GENERATIONS WHO BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF LEGACY TO TRANSFORM HEART HEALTH FOR ALL.



GOWNS & TOWNS GO RED

LOOKING BACK ON THE RED DRESS COLLECTION® CONCERT AND AMERICAN HEART MONTH

American Heart Month kicked off on January 30 in grand style through a collection of signature events in New York City. The American Heart Association's Chairperson, Marsha Jones, hosted the Go Red for Women Visionaries Luncheon on the 9th floor of the Museum of Art and Design. This exceptional event brought together volunteers and staff leaders from across the country for an empowering discussion on the future of women's health. Guests included event chairs and board leadership from trailblazer Go Red for Women events across the country that have raised an incredible \$1 million or more. The Visionaries Luncheon also honored the Leaders of Impact, Women of Impact, and Teen of Impact national winners.

At the Mission Advancement Women's Health and Well-Being Brunch, hosted at Ascent Lounge, CEO Nancy Brown was joined by Dr. Garima Sharma for an insightful and dynamic

roundtable-style discussion. Together, they delved into the critical work being done to champion women's health, exploring how the organization is providing vital support and resources for women at every age and stage of life. The conversation highlighted the Association's ongoing commitment to empowering women to prioritize their health and well-being.

Later that evening, the 2025 American Heart Association's Go Red for Women Red Dress Collection® Concert was held at Jazz at Lincoln Center. This dazzling fashion-forward, musical celebration event was hosted by Academy Award-nominated actress Sharon Stone, alongside musical guests Sara Bareilles and Suki Waterhouse, and included celebrities, changemakers and survivors who graced the runway in stunning red gowns, bringing national attention to the importance of women's heart health.



L to R: Leaders of Impact national winner Corey Bentley with wife Hannah and national Woman of Impact winner, Hana Hooper; Visionaries Luncheon host Marsha Jones, Jennifer Hale, Drs. Jennifer Mieres and Brooke Aggarwal, Jennie Garth; Red Dress Collection Concert host, actress Sharon Stone

On the event stage, CEO Nancy Brown presented the Association's Woman Changing the World award to philanthropist Sarah "Sally" Ross Soter of Palm Beach, Florida whose commitment to, and support of, the mission of the Association spans decades.

Throughout February, communities across the nation came together in celebration of American Heart Month to raise awareness, take action and inspire change. It was a month filled with passion, purpose and powerful moments. In New Orleans, Heart Month took to the biggest stage in sports - *the Super Bowl* - where fans, players, coaches and students had a blast engaging in a variety of sports-related activities and learning about lifesaving CPR. See page 8 to read more!

National Wear Red Day, celebrated this year on February 7, was the perfect opportunity for communities to paint themselves red! From small local businesses to iconic landmarks, buildings across the country lit up in brilliant red hues, creating a striking visual reminder that heart health is a cause that unites everyone.

Local American Heart Association offices in every state hosted a variety of activities, from educational segments on the local news to heart-healthy group walks through town, yoga and exercise classes in local parks, and more. This Heart Month was a powerful testament to what can be accomplished together thanks to dedicated supporters. A lasting impact is being made—one that will be felt for generations.



L to R Top: The Seattle Opera and Guitar Hotel at the Seminole Hard Rock Casino lit up red; Heart Month gathering at the Georgia State Capitol; Bottom: Nancy Brown with Sarah "Sally" Soter and with Damar Hamlin; Anchorage Wolverine's Red-Out game; Wear Red Day Walk in Tampa

GAME-CHANGER: CPR HITS THE SUPER BOWL

THE AHA AND NFL UNITE TO EDUCATE FANS ON CPR

The roar of the Super Bowl crowd isn't just about the game—it's about the moments that bring people together, both on and off the field. This year, the American Heart Association and the National Football League (NFL) once again used the biggest stage in sports to amplify a lifesaving message: learning Hands-Only CPR can save lives.

During the week leading up to Super Bowl LIX in New Orleans, the American Heart Association's Nation of Lifesavers™ movement was woven into a variety of fun and exciting events and activities that put CPR at the forefront.

On Tuesday, February 4, the Association partnered with the Off the Field NFL Wives Association to bring CPR education to a safe swimming program held at Tulane University's Reily Center. The event welcomed nearly 200 children and equipped them with crucial water safety skills, Hands-Only CPR and AED training. With support from the USA Swimming Foundation, the YMCA, and four-time Olympic medalist Cullen Jones, the program emphasized the importance of having the knowledge and confidence to respond in an emergency.

At this year's NFL Super Bowl Experience, held from Wednesday, February 5 to Saturday, February 8 at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans, the Nation of Lifesavers Mobile CPR Training Unit gave fans a chance to learn CPR from qualified trainers. Attendees stepped up to practice the correct rate and depth of CPR compressions, turning their enthusiasm for football into action that could save lives.

This marked the fifth appearance of the Association's Mobile CPR Training Unit at a signature NFL event. Previously, it trained fans at Super Bowl LVIII in Las Vegas, LVII in Phoenix, the 2023 NFL Draft in Kansas City, and the 2024 NFL Draft in Detroit. The Mobile CPR Training Unit will also be onsite to train more lifesavers at the upcoming 2025 NFL Draft in Green Bay.

The NFL and the AHA also hosted New Orleans-area students at Pan American Stadium on February 5 for the annual NFL PLAY 60 Kids Day in advance of the Super Bowl. This invitation-only event welcomed 1,000 students to participate in football-themed skills and drills and learn Hands-Only CPR.

Through Play 60, the NFL has long championed youth health and wellness, encouraging kids to be active for at least 60 minutes a day. Now, that mission includes CPR education, reinforcing the idea that heart health isn't just about movement, it's also about being prepared in an emergency situation. Including CPR awareness into Play 60 programming is shaping a future generation of lifesavers, where every young athlete has the skills to protect their teammates, their families and their communities.

The Association's partnership with the NFL underscores a shared commitment to advancing health and hope for everyone, everywhere. With the power of sports and the dedication of passionate advocates, we are making CPR training a game changer.

Photos opposite page - Top: Off the Field NFL Wives Association swim safety event; Middle: Nation of Lifesavers Mobile CPR Unit at the 2024 NFL Draft; Bottom: NFL Play 60 Kids Day



"AS WE CELEBRATE 18 SEASONS WORKING WITH THE NFL, WE KNOW THAT WITH EVERY CPR TRAINING WE PERFORM, WE ARE ONE STEP CLOSER TO ENSURING THAT EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE IS PREPARED AND EMPOWERED TO PERFORM CPR AND HELP SAVE A LIFE."

- Nancy Brown
Chief Executive Officer, American Heart Association



THE BREATH OF LIFE

THE FASCINATING HISTORY OF CPR

It's as old as the healing arts, as new as a drone delivering an automated external defibrillator (AED). And from primitive methods (like whipping an unconscious victim with stinging nettles) to modern-day cardiovascular pulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the evolution of resuscitation has been marked by decades of abandoned methods as more science becomes available to create those profound *aha!* moments.

Today, we know CPR can revive a person whose heart has stopped – and that anyone can do this, not just medical professionals. The American Heart Association has continued to lead the way in CPR research, training and awareness, including the creation of a global standard in 2000, and now we're working to build a Nation of Lifesavers by training people everywhere to learn this lifesaving skill.

With this issue of *The Pulse* dedicated to the topic, let's look back on a few highlights from the fascinating history of CPR.

1700s



1530-1800s

The Bellows Method, which introduced air (and smoke) into a victim's mouth using a set of blacksmith's bellows, was first used by Swiss physician Paracelsus.

1732

In Alloa, Scotland, local surgeon William Tossach uses mouth-to-mouth breaths to revive a suffocated coal-pit miner. Dr. Tossach documents the success 12 years later, in what may be the first clinical description of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation in medical literature.

1800s



1858

Henry Silvester, a London physician, creates the chest-pressure arm-lift method: raise the patient's arms up to expand the chest, then cross the arms over the chest to apply expiratory pressure.

1891

After using external compressions to restart the hearts of 2 young human patients, German surgeon Dr. Friedrich Maass becomes the first to advocate chest compressions, rather than ventilation alone, to help with circulation. But the technique doesn't take hold, and for the next half century, open-heart massage is the standard.

1920s 1940s



1924

Six cardiologists meet in Chicago and form the American Heart Association as a professional society for physicians.

1947

In Cleveland, Ohio, cardiothoracic surgeon Dr. Claude Beck performs the first successful use of an electric defibrillator on an exposed human heart.



1950s

1956

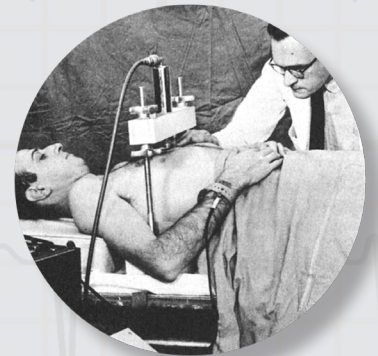
Dr. James Elam and Dr. Peter Safar prove that mouth-to-mouth resuscitation is an effective lifesaving method. Drs. Elam, Safar, and Archer Gordon play leading roles in promoting rescue breathing to professional healthcare providers and the public alike.

For the first time in human medicine, an external defibrillator successfully restores a steady rhythm to a quivering heart. Harvard cardiologist Dr. Paul Zoll leads the study with funding from the AHA.



1957

After years of research on closed-chest defibrillation, Dr. Kouwenhoven's team at John's Hopkins, which includes James Jude, MD, and Guy Knickerbocker, PhD, unveils its prototype of the first portable external defibrillator (on a wheeled cart): the 200-lb Hopkins Closed Chest Defibrillator.



1960s



1960

Resuscitation pioneers Drs. Kouwenhoven, Safar, and Jude combine mouth-to-mouth breathing with chest compressions to create cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the lifesaving actions we now call CPR.

The AHA starts a program to acquaint physicians with closed-chest cardiac resuscitation, which becomes the forerunner of CPR training for the general public.



1970s



1972

In Seattle, University of Washington cardiologist Dr. Leonard Cobb launches Medic II, the world's first mass citizen training in CPR. During its first 2 years, the program helps train more than 100,000 people.

1975

The AHA publishes the first Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) Textbook.

1980s



1981

A program to provide telephone instructions for performing CPR begins in King County, Washington. The program trains emergency dispatchers to give callers CPR instructions while EMT personnel are in route to the scene.

1990s

1999

The first task force on first aid is appointed. This year also sees the first International Conference on Guidelines for CPR and Emergency Cardiovascular Care (ECC).

2000s



2000

The AHA journal *Circulation* publishes new international Guidelines for CPR and Emergency Cardiovascular Care, a scientific consensus of the AHA and resuscitation councils from around the world, setting a new global standard for proper treatment of cardiac arrest emergencies.

2005

The AHA develops the Family & Friends® CPR Anytime® kit, an innovative product that enables anyone to learn the core skills of CPR in just 20 minutes.

2008

The AHA releases new recommendations that bystanders who are untrained, unwilling or unable can use Hands-Only CPR to help an adult or teen who collapses suddenly.

2012

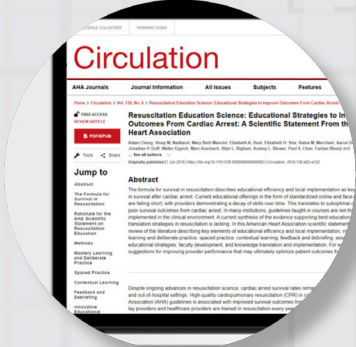
The AHA's Hands-Only Mobile Tour hits the road to teach Hands-Only CPR across the country.





2013

The AHA installs an interactive CPR kiosk at Dallas-Ft. Worth airport. It features a practice manikin, video, and touch screen that give performance feedback as passengers between flights learn to perform Hands-Only CPR. Within 5 years, there will be more than 30 CPR kiosks in cities across the country.



2018

The AHA publishes "Resuscitation Education Science: Educational Strategies to Improve Outcomes from Cardiac Arrest" in the journal *Circulation*. This statement, which is applicable to all resuscitation training programs (not exclusive to the AHA), examines best practices in education and applies them to resuscitation. By implementing the statement's guidance, training programs and resuscitation instructors will help raise the standard of care and increase survival from cardiac arrest.



2023

Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin suffers a cardiac arrest on the field during Monday Night Football. His inspiring story of survival raises awareness about the importance of knowing CPR and having AEDs in public places, and leads to an AHA movement to create a Nation of Lifesavers through expanded training across the U.S.





Buffalo Bills safety, Damar Hamlin, serves as the American Heart Association's national ambassador for Nation of Lifesavers



BUILDING A NATION OF LIFESAVERS

WORKING TO DOUBLE CARDIAC ARREST SURVIVAL RATES

You're strolling through the grocery store, checking items off your list, when you hear a loud thud. A man has collapsed in front of you, eerily still. His chest isn't rising. He isn't breathing. The seconds stretch endlessly as people around you freeze, unsure of what to do. Your heart races. Would you know how to help? Would you be confident enough to act?

More than 350,000 cardiac arrests happen outside hospitals each year, and survival depends on bystanders stepping in. Immediate CPR can double or even triple survival rates, yet fewer than half of those who experience cardiac arrest receive help before paramedics arrive. The majority of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests - approximately 73.4% - occur in homes or residences, meaning the person whose life you save is most likely to be a friend or family member.

When Buffalo Bills' safety, Damar Hamlin, collapsed on the field from sudden cardiac arrest during Monday Night Football in January 2023, it left a nation hanging in suspense. What followed was a sense of awe over the lifesaving emergency response Hamlin received that enabled him to make a full recovery. That incident is what launched the Nation of Lifesavers™ initiative, with Hamlin at the center as a national ambassador, driven by a bold goal that by 2030, survival rates from sudden cardiac arrest will be doubled.

As we saw on our screens that fateful day on the football field, every second matters in a cardiac emergency, yet most Americans don't feel confident enough to act. When Nation of Lifesavers launched, nearly 70% of U.S. adults polled said they wouldn't feel confident acting in a cardiac emergency. The good news is that progress is already happening. In the two years since the dynamic nationwide campaign of CPR training and education began, confidence has risen from 33% to 39%—meaning 17.7 million more Americans now feel ready to step in and perform CPR.

"Our strategy is working," said Nancy Brown, CEO of the American Heart Association. "This increase in confidence represents not only the success of our awareness and education efforts, but more importantly, the additional lives saved when someone with training responds in an emergency."

"YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN IT'S GOING TO BE YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO STEP IN AND SAVE A LIFE. CPR AND AEDS ARE WHY I'M STILL HERE TODAY. GIVING SOMEONE THE SKILLS AND POWER TO SAVE A LIFE IS A SUPERPOWER, IF YOU ASK ME."

- Damar Hamlin
Safety, Buffalo Bills
Founder, Chasing M's Foundation
National Ambassador, Nation of Lifesavers

The Nation of Lifesavers initiative has brought together communities, health care professionals, sports teams, celebrities, coaches, school teachers, parents and passionate individuals from all over the country to create a safer and healthier nation. One of the most exciting highlights of the campaign has been the widespread adoption of CPR and AED training.

Each year, more than 23,000 children experience cardiac arrest, with nearly 40% of cases related to sports, an alarming number that must be changed. The Smart Heart Sports Coalition, a groundbreaking initiative launched in 2023 by the National Football League (NFL) in collaboration with other major sports organizations and leading health advocacy groups, has been instrumental in supporting the Nation of Lifesavers initiative. One of the key initiatives of the Coalition is the AEDs for Youth program, which makes new AEDs available to public and private K-12 schools and youth sports organizations across the country at substantial discounts. This program aims to increase the accessibility of life-saving devices, ensuring that they are readily available in case of an emergency.

A tremendous complement to this is the Association's CPR & First Aid in Youth Sports™ Training Kit, designed to teach the skills of CPR, how to use an AED, and basic first aid skills. It is tailored for youth athletes, coaches, officials and parents, ensuring they are prepared to handle emergencies both on and off the field. The kit includes manikins, AED training tools and a facilitator guide, making it easy for anyone to conduct the training sessions. The AHA has similar kits available for use in schools to aid with CPR education for students, teachers and school staff (see page 23).

The Nation of Lifesavers campaign has also focused on educating the public about the importance of heart health. Through various events, workshops and online resources, the AHA has provided valuable information on preventing heart disease and recognizing the signs of a heart attack versus cardiac arrest and how to respond accordingly. This knowledge has undoubtedly saved countless lives and improved the overall well-being of many individuals, however still not everyone has an equal chance of receiving lifesaving care. Research shows people in predominantly Black and Hispanic communities are far less likely to receive CPR from a bystander, and women are less likely to receive CPR in public settings. Language barriers and lack of access to training prevent many from learning this essential skill, and these disparities have real consequences. Every minute without CPR reduces survival odds by 10%. Delaying CPR—or not performing it at all—can mean the difference between life and death.

The American Heart Association is working to close these gaps, making CPR training more accessible in every community. It's not just about increasing the number of trained individuals—it's about ensuring that when someone collapses, those around them don't hesitate. They step in. They start compressions. They give someone the best chance to survive. Together with our valued donors and supporters, we will continue to build a Nation of Lifesavers, because when more people know CPR, more lives are saved.

“WHETHER A PARENT, NEIGHBOR, CLASSMATE, COACH OR CAREGIVER, ALMOST ALL OF US HAVE CHILDREN IN OUR LIVES. PREVENTING A TRAGEDY BEGINS WITH BEING PREPARED.”

- Keith B. Churchwell, MD, FACC, FACP, FAHA
President, American Heart Association
Cor Vitae Society | Champion's Circle



PREPAREDNESS AND EDUCATION IN ACTION

Best friends since seventh grade, Torrie Norwood, 16, and Azarria Simmons, 17 (*pictured together above left*), had just spent a typical Saturday night out when they decided to head home. As they drove back to their hometown of St. Petersburg, Florida, another car plowed into them. After the impact, Torrie opened her eyes and realized the car had been pushed into a tree right smack in the middle of someone's front yard.

Then the screaming started. "It's gonna blow!" yelled the gathering crowd as the pickup truck went up in smoke. Torrie's door wouldn't open, but her window had been knocked out during the crash, so she had an obvious escape route. She ran away from the car down the street, but when she turned around expecting to see Azarria running with her, she realized her friend was still stuck in the car.

"She was unresponsive in the back seat," says Torrie. "I had to drag her out because she wasn't moving or breathing. There was glass and blood everywhere." Fortunately, Torrie knew exactly what she needed to do. Just the day before the accident, Torrie received CPR training and earned her certification at Lakewood High School. In a moment of clarity amidst the chaos, Torrie instructed a bystander to call 911 and got to work.

"My focus was only on one thing. I started CPR," Torrie says. After 30 chest compressions and two rescue breaths, Azarria began to show signs of life. Just then, the paramedics arrived to rush Azarria to the nearest hospital. "I just kept asking them if she was going to be okay," remembers Torrie. After the ambulance took off with lights and sirens, Torrie spent hours trying to reconnect with Azarria, who was finally found over FaceTime sporting a fresh set of stitches above her eyebrow. "If Torrie hadn't performed CPR, it would have been a different story, because the medics got there too late," Azarria says. "What Torrie did didn't surprise me. She would have done that for anyone. That's just the type of person she is."

"I feel like CPR training should be a requirement in schools," Torrie says. "A lot of stuff we learn, we don't use anymore once we graduate. But CPR is something we can use for the rest of our lives."

INSIDE INTERVIEW

WITH AMBER BAKER

NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT, NATION OF LIFESAVERS
AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION



The American Heart Association has set an ambitious goal to double survival rates for out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrest by 2030 by ensuring CPR and AED use become second nature for bystanders. Helping to lead this charge is Amber Baker, National Vice President of Programs for the Nation of Lifesavers, bringing over two decades of experience at the AHA to this pivotal role that is now at the forefront of revolutionizing CPR training, helping to expand access, break down barriers and create a culture where lifesaving skills are a natural part of everyday life. From championing Hands-Only CPR to advocating for policies that ensure more people learn these critical skills, Amber is working alongside a dedicated team that is making CPR more accessible than ever before.

In this exclusive interview, Amber shares how CPR training has evolved, the challenges still ahead, and what it will take to build a Nation of Lifesavers where everyone, everywhere, is empowered to step in and save a life.

Q Amber, you have been with the American Heart Association for over 20 years. How have you seen CPR awareness and training evolve over the years?

A Over the past two decades, I've seen CPR become more accessible and widely recognized than ever before. For example, CPR has become a graduation requirement in most states. Hands-Only CPR was introduced as the main method to teach communities. CPR kiosks have been placed in many high-traffic areas, and now they're even mobile, reaching more people than ever. These are just a few of the incredible advancements that have transformed how we equip people to save lives.

Q What progress are you most proud of regarding CPR awareness and education?

A This is tough to narrow down, but I keep coming back to the same answer. I'm incredibly proud of and grateful for the recent HEARTS Act. This law ensures schools nationwide are equipped with CPR training, AEDs and emergency response plans, not just for students but for staff and visitors as well. It's a game-changer that will make a real difference in life-or-death situations. Legislation like this is made possible in part by our incredible grassroots advocacy network, You're the Cure, and other staff and supporters advocating in their states and communities for these lifesaving policies.



AHA Staff and volunteers at South Carolina Lobby Day advocating for The Smart Heart Act to have schools adopt Cardiac Emergency Response Plans.

Q CPR saves lives, but many people still don't know how to perform it. What are some challenges you face in increasing awareness and training?

A This is a big one. Increasing survival rates from out-of-hospital cardiac arrest starts with awareness, which leads to education. Training fosters confidence, which ultimately leads to action. Some people hesitate out of fear. They worry they'll harm the person in need even more. Others face cultural barriers or concerns about performing CPR on women, which can cause hesitation in critical moments. Additionally, not all states require CPR training for graduation, and some that do often lack funding for proper resources. Overcoming these challenges is critical to empowering more bystanders to become lifesavers.

Q The Nation of Lifesavers initiative has been a game-changer in putting CPR on the national stage. What has that campaign meant for the AHA?

A This initiative truly has been a game-changer in so many ways. For over 60 years now, the AHA has been at the forefront of CPR education, and the Nation of Lifesavers initiative has taken it even further. It's made CPR more relevant than ever and united organizations, companies and supporters to transform our country from a nation of bystanders into a nation of lifesavers. Since the initiative's beginning just a few years ago, 17.7 million more Americans feel confident to take action in a cardiac emergency. There has already been a substantial and direct impact in communities across the country. This is something that anyone, anywhere, can take action on. There's so much we do as an organization, but this is one area where everyone can clearly see their role—and we need everyone involved.

Q The AHA has set a goal to double cardiac arrest survival rates by 2030. How will we achieve that, and how can donors get involved?

A I could talk about this all day! To succeed by 2030, we must make bystander CPR and AED use a social norm. Imagine a world where CPR is just a natural part of life. Kids learning it in elementary school, parents becoming certified before taking their newborns home, drivers refreshing their life-saving skills when renewing their licenses. It should be something we all just do. We need accurate, publicly available data on cardiac arrests so we can deploy resources effectively. And we need to accelerate funding and collaboration between science, healthcare, and industry to improve access for all.

"FOR DONORS, THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS TO HELP. LEARNING CPR THEMSELVES IS A GREAT FIRST STEP. ENCOURAGING THEIR NETWORKS TO DO THE SAME IS ANOTHER. JOINING YOU'RE THE CURE TO ADVOCATE FOR RESOURCES IN THEIR STATES CAN MAKE A HUGE IMPACT. AND, OF COURSE, INVESTING IN CPR TRAINING RESOURCES HELPS PUT LIFESAVING SKILLS DIRECTLY INTO COMMUNITIES."

- Amber Baker
National Vice President, Nation of Lifesavers
American Heart Association

IGNITING A COMMUNITY

A SHARED COMMITMENT TO HEALTH AND PREPAREDNESS IS TRANSFORMING CLEVELAND'S NEIGHBORHOODS



George Sullivan addressing the crowd as Heart Walk Chair

When George Sullivan looks around his community in Cleveland, he sees the potential for lifesaving change. He knows that with the right resources and knowledge, ordinary people can become heroes in critical moments. That belief led him to partner with the American Heart Association to expand CPR awareness and preparedness in Cleveland and beyond.

Heart disease has left its mark on George's family. When his mother needed a quadruple bypass, it was a wake-up call. Watching her fight through surgery and recovery deepened his understanding of just how urgent the battle against cardiovascular disease is. As the number one killer of Americans, heart disease takes too many lives - but George is determined to help change that.

George is a longstanding Cor Vitae Society member and a key supporter of the Cleveland Heart Walk, having served as Heart Walk Chair twice. His involvement has helped rally others to the cause, raising awareness and bringing the community together to fight heart disease. To him, the Heart Walk is more than just an event - it's a chance to honor survivors, remember loved ones, inspire action and ignite a community.

CPR training is especially close to George's heart. He believes in the power of a single person to save a life if they have the knowledge and confidence to act. Across the nation, more than 350,000 people experience out-of-hospital cardiac arrests each year, and data shows that Black and Hispanic people are less likely to receive CPR in emergencies. Through his generous gift, George has directly increased CPR awareness and emergency response readiness in four local Cleveland churches serving predominantly Black communities. His support helped enable AHA's

"KNOWING WHAT TO DO IN THOSE CRITICAL MOMENTS CAN MEAN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH. IF MORE PEOPLE HAD THE TRAINING, WE COULD SAVE SO MANY LIVES."

**- George Sullivan
Cor Vitae Society | President's Circle**



local community impact team to purchase AEDs and provide credentialed CPR training for the churches' members. These churches are trusted community hubs, offering essential services such as food assistance, health screenings and support programs, and now are able to help train community members in lifesaving CPR.

Recognizing their deep ties and influence, George's support allowed AHA staff partners to work closely with the churches' pastors to address the pressing health needs of their congregations. Together, they wrote Cardiac Emergency Response Plans (CERPs) to ensure that each church has a structured plan in place for cardiac emergencies, increasing awareness in the communities they serve. These churches, already pillars of strength in their neighborhoods, are now ensuring more people are prepared to act when seconds matter.

What excites George most about supporting the American Heart Association is its ability to create change on multiple levels. He sees the impact globally, nationally, and most importantly, in his own community.

"The AHA is making a difference everywhere, but I love that I can see the impact right here in Cleveland," he says. "That's why I'm proud to be part of this mission. We can all play a role in making a difference."



Members from New Fellowship Baptist Church (above), Bethany Christian Church (top right), Mt. Gillion Baptist Church (right) and St. Matthew Baptist Church (not pictured) were trained in CPR and AED

LIFE-SAVING LESSONS

HOW THE AHA WORKS WITH SCHOOLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO HELP STUDENTS LEARN CPR BEFORE THEY GRADUATE

Close your eyes and imagine a high school classroom filled with students gathered around training manikins. Some are laughing nervously, unsure of what to expect, while others focus intently, their hands pressing firmly on the manikins' chests. The rhythmic counting echoes through the room as they practice chest compressions, learning the movements that could one day save a life.

This isn't just a lesson—it's a moment that could change lives and their community forever. Now, imagine one of those students years later, stepping in during an emergency and saving a life because of what they learned that day.

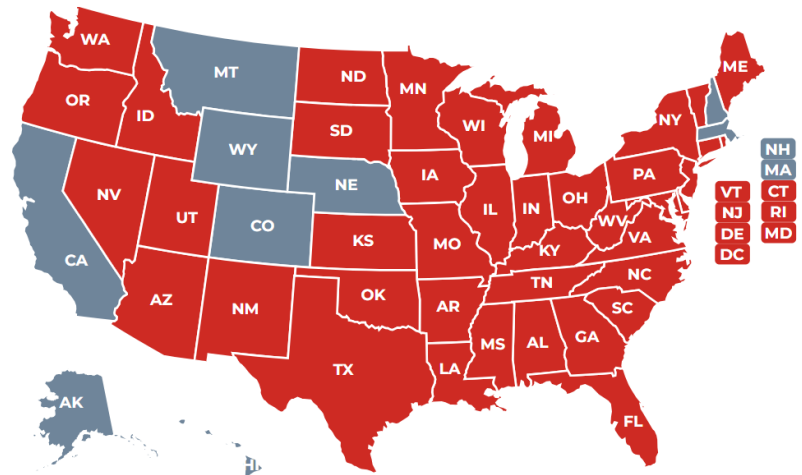
This is the vision driving the American Heart Association's CPR in Schools initiative: to empower young people with lifesaving skills and spark a ripple effect of preparedness and hope in communities across the nation.

When you think of what students must accomplish before graduation, final exams or college applications might come to mind. But in over 40 states, CPR training is also on the list. Thanks to new legislation in these states, high school students are required to complete CPR training before earning their diplomas.

These laws, championed by years of advocacy from the AHA and our partners, have already equipped millions of young people with the knowledge and confidence to respond in critical moments.

Is Your State Leading the Way?

The below map of the United States shows which states have adopted CPR in Schools legislation*. If your state is shaded red, you're part of the movement turning classrooms into lifesaving training grounds. For states still on the journey, continued advocacy offers hope that one day, CPR training will be a standard part of every high school education.



* CA - California passed legislation requiring students enrolled in a health class learn CPR. This legislation covers 89% of the student population.

In Palmdale, California, Desert Willow Intermediate School Assistant Principal Kathy Moshier has seen firsthand how this training empowers students. "The best thing for me has been seeing the change in the students," she said. "Many of them had doubts coming in, but you could see their faces light up when they realized they could actually save a life."

"THE BEST THING FOR ME HAS BEEN SEEING THE CHANGE IN THE STUDENTS."

- Kathy Moshier, Assistant Principal
Desert Willow Intermediate School

CPR training builds more than technical skills—it instills confidence, responsibility and a sense of community. To support this vital mission, the AHA developed the CPR in Schools® Training Kit, making it easier than ever for schools to incorporate lifesaving education into their classrooms.

Designed specifically for schools, the easy-to-use kit can train up to 20 students at a time and includes instruction on CPR, how to use an AED, and basic first aid. In just one class period, students walk away with skills that could double or even triple a person's chance of survival during sudden cardiac arrest.



ENSURING EVERY SCHOOL HAS A PLAN IN PLACE



Sudden cardiac arrest occurs in both children and adults in the school setting, and survival rates from such events are low. With nearly 20% of the adult and child population located in schools throughout the United States on any given day, the presence of a **Cardiac Emergency Response Plan (CERP)** in schools is particularly important. A CERP is a comprehensive, written document that establishes the specific steps to improve survival from Sudden Cardiac Arrest taking place in or around a school facility. The adoption, practice, and use of a Cardiac Emergency Response Plan by schools can increase survival by increasing recognition of cardiac arrest, CPR and AED use, and communication with local EMS.

The AHA recommends that state laws, regulations and related educational standards require schools to develop and maintain an emergency response plan that follows evidence-based core elements:

- » Establishing a cardiac emergency response team
- » Activating the team in response to a sudden cardiac arrest
- » Implementing AED placement and routine maintenance within the school that follow guidelines set by the American Heart Association
- » Disseminating and communicating the plan throughout the school campus
- » Maintaining ongoing staff training in CPR/AED use
- » Practicing using drills
- » Integrating local EMS with the plan
- » Ongoing and annual review and evaluation of the plan, including post-event evaluation and review

Donors at every giving level have opportunities to support CPR in schools. Talk to your staff partner on the myriad ways you can make a difference. Together, we're building a generation ready to save lives—one classroom, one student, and one community at a time.



Cardiac arrest survivors, families who have lost a loved one to cardiac arrest, health care providers and other advocates from across the nation in Washington, D.C. as part of Hearts on the Hill, urging elected representatives to support the HEARTS Act.

HEARTS ON THE HILL

THE AHA AND ITS SUPPORTERS ADVOCATE WITH HEART

The American Heart Association has been a leading advocate for CPR education and AED accessibility for decades, significantly impacting public health and safety. The mission is clear: to create a world where everyone is equipped with the knowledge and tools to save lives from sudden cardiac arrest. CPR advocacy and policy work is central to the Nation of Lifesavers movement, and is rooted in a commitment to improving survival rates and empowering individuals to act confidently during cardiac emergencies.

One of the most recent key legislative successes of the AHA's advocacy work is the inclusion of the Access to AEDs Act within the broader HEARTS Act, signed into law in December 2024. The HEARTS (Cardiomyopathy Health Education, Awareness, Research, and Training in Schools) Act ensures that students, staff and visitors in schools across the United States are prepared to respond to cardiac emergencies. This legislation mandates that public schools have AEDs on-site and that students, staff, and volunteers are trained in CPR and emergency response plans.

Through the Association's Hearts on the Hill campaign, in December 2024, a group of passionate advocates descended on Washington, D.C., meeting with members of Congress. Their efforts were instrumental in raising awareness about the importance of CPR training and AED accessibility in schools, ultimately contributing to the passage of the HEARTS Act. Nation of Lifesavers national ambassador and Buffalo Bill's safety, Damar Hamlin, was also a tremendous supporter and worked with Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) on the bill. The NFL's Smart Hearts Coalition also supported the aim to help improve heart health education around the country.



"THE BIPARTISAN HEARTS ACT IS A MONUMENTAL STEP FORWARD IN SAVING LIVES FROM CARDIAC ARREST ON SCHOOL GROUNDS AND ATHLETIC FACILITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY."

- Nancy Brown
Chief Executive Officer
American Heart Association

Senator Chuck Schumer, Damar Hamlin, Nancy Brown and Jeff Miller (NFL)

ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT

"It happened a year ago. I was 15 years old when I went into cardiac arrest. I can't remember any of it – but have heard the story many times. That day, soccer practice started like any other. We were warming up by running around the track when I collapsed. My coach ran over, realized I didn't have a pulse and called 911. He started CPR while my assistant coach ran to the school to get the AED. After three rounds of CPR, the AED arrived. My coaches used it and brought me back to life before the ambulance got there.

I spent 10 days in the hospital and after a lot of tests, I had surgery to implant what's called an internal cardioverter defibrillator (ICD). Now, if my heart ever stops again or goes out of rhythm, my ICD will give me an electric shock and fix my heartbeat.

I'm lucky that I go to a school where an AED was available and that my coaches knew what to do when I collapsed. I want every kid to have that opportunity if they go into cardiac arrest. Now thanks to a new law in Ohio, they will. House Bill 47 requires that every school in our state have both AEDs and Cardiac Emergency Response Plans, so that teachers and other staff know what to do if someone goes into cardiac arrest.

Today, I can still do everything I love, like play soccer, and I'm so thankful for that. I only hope that more kids are able to do the same thanks to this life-changing legislation."

Canen Dickman
Sudden Cardiac Arrest Survivor, Advocate



Canen Dickman on Capitol Hill

A MOTHER'S LEGACY

HOW THIS MOM PLANNED TO SECURE HER FAMILY'S FUTURE WHILE CREATING LASTING CHANGE



Rebekah Garrett with son Jaire, wearing their AHA red

Some moments change the way you see everything. For Rebekah Garrett, becoming a mother changed her perspective. She had always believed in being prepared—first as a lifeguard trained in CPR, then as someone passionate about heart health awareness. But with a child depending on her, she realized there was another kind of preparation she needed to take: securing her family's future. Now, being prepared wasn't just about reacting to emergencies, it was about planning ahead and being ready for whatever might come.

That's what led her to create a will using the simple and secure online platform powered by FreeWill. Rebekah wanted the peace of mind that having a solid estate plan offers, knowing that her loved ones would be provided for after she was gone.

When creating her will online, she came to the section that asked if she'd like to include a legacy gift to an organization she cared about. Rebekah immediately thought of the American Heart Association.

"My husband and I wanted to make sure our son was taken care of," she says, "but we also saw an opportunity to give back." Completing the gift commitment portion of the process was simple and took just minutes. "I had no idea how easy it was to include a cause I care about in my will. Once I saw the option, it was a no-brainer."

Heart disease and stroke had shaped her family's story long before she was born. She lost her paternal grandmother at a young age and never had the chance to truly know her as she grew up. Her father's sister also passed away before the age of 60. Both were Black women, and their losses weighed heavily on Rebekah—not only because of the personal void they left, but also because they reflected a larger, painful reality about health care disparities. Many Black people have disproportionately high blood pressure and risk for cardiovascular disease, which can be influenced by societal and historical inequities among other factors.

"I HAD NO IDEA HOW EASY IT WAS TO INCLUDE A CAUSE I CARE ABOUT IN MY WILL. ONCE I SAW THE OPTION, IT WAS A NO-BRAINER."

- Rebekah Garrett

Cor Vitae Society | Paul Dudley White Legacy Circle

"There's this underlying desire to be closer to them and just feeling a little cheated that I didn't get to establish those relationships. It also plants a little bit of fear about what it may mean for my health," she reflects. That fear became even more real in January when her father, 74, suffered a stroke.

Rebekah's stint as a lifeguard taught her early on how critical it is to be trained in lifesaving CPR and to be confident in those moments that matter most. When she became a mom, she revisited that training with new urgency. "I needed to make sure I was up to date and prepared to perform infant CPR, just in case," she says. She hopes others will do the same, knowing that CPR saves lives every day. Her family's history with heart disease and stroke further cemented her passion for heart health, especially for women and Black communities, who continue to face higher risks and disparities in care.

She believes that more awareness, research and education can save lives, which is why she makes a point to wear red every year on National Wear Red Day, using it as an opportunity to spark conversations and advocate for change. And now she proudly supports the AHA's work through her will bequest, becoming a valued member of the Cor Vitae Society's Paul Dudley White Legacy Circle.

Through her legacy gift, Rebekah is helping fund the research, education and programs that will make a difference for her son, and generations to come. For her, planning for the future isn't just about her own family, it's about creating a world where more people get the chance to live longer, healthier lives.



Rebekah Garrett with husband Jahi and their son Jaire



American Heart Association.

Cor Vitae Society

Paul Dudley White Legacy Circle

Create your own heartfelt legacy.

To learn more about the many legacy gift planning options available to you, contact us at plannedgiving@heart.org. You can also create your free, valid will online anytime at [Freewill.com/Heart](https://www.freewill.com/Heart).

National Center
7272 Greenville Avenue
Dallas, TX 75231

Celebrating American Heart Month in NYC



L to R - Top: Supporters of Go Red for Women at an event held in Manolo Blahnik store; Go Red for Women Visionaries Luncheon panelists; Nancy Brown and Damar Hamlin filming on the set of Good Morning America. Middle: AHA President Dr. Keith Churchwell with wife Leslie at the Red Dress Collection Concert; Sarah "Sally" Soter with daughter Sarah Ziegler; Marsha Martin, Liz Elting, Andréa Frazier and Laurie McGraw; Dr. Garima Sharma with Nancy Brown; Bottom: Mission Advancement Women's Health and Well-being Brunch; Alicia Sanguinetti, Anita Del Grande, Susan Carter, Pamela Neal and Patricia Watts; Brett Morgan and Svetlana Chirilova