



CASE STUDY

Beyond Fun and Games: Plano Parks & Recreation and City of Plano Take Safety Seriously

AEDs and CPR Training Help Save Six Lives



Plano Parks & Recreation (PARD) in Plano, Texas, is known for innovative programs and expansive facilities across the city. From aquatics facilities to softball complexes, the department offers Plano's 270,000 residents a variety of locations and amenities for their leisure endeavors.

While PARD is all about having fun, it is also serious about safety. Amy Fortenberry, the department's director, oversees a comprehensive safety program that helps ensure that the 4.1 million annual visits to its facilities occur without incident. If there is an incident, her staff has the training and tools they need to help save a life, whether they are working at a special event, one of the parks, a fitness center, or another venue.

The department has 29 automated external defibrillators (AEDs) strategically placed in each of its 14 locations, including a "floater" for park events. The department also has more than 600 staff members trained in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of an AED.

Since April 2007, six victims of sudden cardiac arrest, ranging in age from their early 20s to mid-80s, have been saved at its facilities, including at a pool, a weight room, the senior center, and a softball complex. Ironically, the latest save happened during a ceremony honoring the rescuers of a previous life-saving event the month before at the Tom Muehlenbeck Recreation Center. This 82,000-square-foot, two-level fitness center has four defibrillators.

Building the Parks & Recreation AED Program

Plano Parks & Recreation's AED program began in 2004, following an incident at a recreation center where the person did not survive. Amy Fortenberry, who at the time was the recreation division manager, realized the importance of equipping the pools with AEDs and expanding the AED program to other recreational facilities.



"At least five people in our community are with their families because AEDs were in place and people knew how to use them."

Plano Fire-Rescue Captain Jack Sides

Amy initially reached out to Plano Fire-Rescue for assistance and quickly discovered that they had a common interest in training people in CPR. The two organizations, along with the school district and several hospitals, joined forces to begin providing mass CPR training called "CPR Blow-Outs" to the community to train laypeople on how to respond in the event of a sudden cardiac arrest. Soon, AED training under the medical director of Plano Fire-Rescue was added to the program.

As community CPR and AED training was taking place, Amy asked the Plano city manager to add a line item to the city budget for AEDs. It took two rounds of negotiations and two years to gain approval to purchase AEDs for Parks & Recreation.

Initially 19 AEDs were placed at the aquatics facilities in 2005. Eventually AEDs were installed in the recreation centers, and each new facility built is equipped with at least one AED. Each location has a site coordinator trained in CPR and AED usage who trains his or her staff. Because of the large number of in-house CPR/AED instructors, all full-time and part-time employees continue to be trained yearly.

To keep track of employee CPR training certification and AED maintenance, the department utilizes an online management program called PlusTrac™ from En-Pro™ Management. PlusTrac maintains AED program compliance by monitoring ongoing changes in rules and regulations regarding AEDs. In addition, it sends out reminders when CPR/AED training or AED maintenance is needed. "PlusTrac makes it easy for us to make sure we are always up-to-date on maintenance and training," said Gregg Gagnon, Plano Parks & Recreation superintendent.

Building the City of Plano's AED Program

In 2011 Plano's city manager required Plano Fire-Rescue to have AEDs installed in all public facilities. In addition, the city manager mandated training in CPR and AEDs for all city employees.

Amy Fortenberry welcomed the fire department's call when they reached out to her to discuss the program. "We already had a successful safety program, and I was concerned that city employees would not be as cognizant or comfortable with AED maintenance and CPR training as we are," she explained. "Safety is such a core part of what we do. Our aquatics staff goes through weekly training. However, at public buildings





like the library, safety is not their core business, and their main focus is not about AEDs. I wanted to make sure that the city had a program in place so training and maintenance would not fall through the cracks. The worst thing would be if someone needed assistance and the AED was not ready or was stuck in a drawer somewhere."

Based on the success of Plano Parks & Recreation's CPR/AED program, Plano Fire-Rescue adopted the Parks & Recreation CPR/AED protocol. Now all of the city's CPR training and 68 AEDs (which include Parks & Recreation's) in 47 locations are managed with PlusTrac.



"PlusTrac offers us one central location to coordinate our program instead of our having to talk with multiple department supervisors," said Plano Fire-Rescue Captain Jack Sides, who is responsible for the city's

safety program. PlusTrac helps the city's more than 35 designated site coordinators manage their AEDs by alerting them when AEDs need to be checked and when personnel need to be recertified.

Easy to Use

According to Captain Sides, the city chose the ZOLL AED Plus[®] because of its ease of use for the layperson as well as its ability to collect rescue data. Plano Fire-Rescue is heavily involved in EMS research, and the data collected from the AED Plus allow staff to determine what is working and what does not make a difference.

In the first four months of 2013, Plano Fire-Rescue was involved in five successful saves around the city, including two through Parks & Recreation. "Our safety program has had a great impact this year alone," said Captain Sides. "At least five people in our community are with their families because AEDs were in place and people knew how to use them. I would like to see AEDs hanging like fire extinguishers everywhere."

CARES Agency (Cardiac Arrest Registry to Enhance Survival) data shows that in Plano, the Utstein survival rate is 65 percent and the overall survival rate from cardiac arrest is 17.1 percent, both well above the national averages.

"Plano Fire-Rescue and Plano Parks & Recreation have a common goal of safety and response in the community and have joined forces," added Amy. "Fire-Rescue looks at us as providing fun activities, but they know we are doing it safely and making sure our patrons go home at the end of the night. We see those we saved come walking in a few weeks later. I don't know how you can get a better outcome than that!"

The ZOLL AED Plus, the first and only Full-Rescue AED that provides Real CPR Help[®] for depth and rate of chest compressions, audibly coaches rescuers with prompts such as "Push Harder" or "Good Compressions" during CPR.



A Tribute to Plano Parks & Recreation from Tom McFeely

Tom is the first of six survivors saved with the help of trained staff and the availability of AEDs in the Parks & Recreation facilities.

"Were it not for the Plano Parks & Recreation Department implementing the AED program in 2005, I would not be writing this letter. In April of 2007, I was playing softball at Heritage Park in Plano when I passed out on the field. Fortunately the umpire started CPR as it was thought I was having a heart attack. However, I wasn't having a heart attack. I had, for lack of a better term, blown a fuse. Long story short, after trying CPR for a couple minutes with no results, Parks & Recreation staff brought out the AED Plus and it did the job of getting my heart started. The ambulance then showed up and whisked me off to the hospital. I woke up four days later wondering what happened. While I was out, my teammates were busy getting donations to get another AED for the softball fields. We raised enough in a month or so to get another unit for Plano Parks & Recreation. Plano Parks & Recreation's forward thinking on their AED program has not only saved my life, but a few others since they started having the AEDs placed at various venues throughout the parks system."



Life-Savers: Plano Parks & Recreation employees who have helped a victim of sudden cardiac arrest include (L to R) Recreation Coordinators Sara Deats and Jason Owen; Aquatics Coordinator Paul Macias; and Athletic Coordinator Patrick Brunelle. Brunelle was involved in saving Tom McFeely, the department's first survivor, using a ZOLL AED Plus.

"Plano Parks & Recreation's forward thinking on their AED program has not only saved my life, but a few others ..."

Survivor Tom McFeely

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