



## Media Release

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON  
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Vernon, BC  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Vernon Recreation Centre Staff Saves 36 Year Old Female From Sudden Death Syndrome**

At approximately 2:43.45 p.m. on Tuesday, January 24, a 36 year old female visiting from Killarney, Manitoba, was in the fitness room of the Vernon Recreation Centre. She fell off the treadmill and was appearing to be having a seizure.

The woman running beside her alerted the front desk of the Vernon Recreation Centre about the incident. Two senior Staff (Norlene Keller, Aquatics Programmer and Gary Lefebvre, Aquatic Leader) were alerted. Gary Lefebvre ran and got the crash kit and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and Norlene arrived to assess the patient.

The patient was unresponsive and not breathing, so when Gary got up to the fitness room they moved the patient to an area (from in between two treadmills) where they could work on her. Gary immediately started compressions (CPR) while Norlene got the AED ready. They were joined by Laura Hitchen who teamed up with them and took care of the breathing part of the rescue. Rae Kievit ran to call 911.

Gary, Norlene and Laura worked together and hooked up the AED. The AED power was on and within seconds of being connected to the patient, it advised them that a shock was necessary. They supplied the shock and immediately started into CPR.

They continued with CPR (three rounds applied, then Norlene took over) she was applying compressions. The patient began breathing. Laura called out, "I'm getting some resistance to breathing." (This meant the patient could breath on her own.) The EMT's arrived to the lobby of the Vernon Recreation Centre at 2:52. The Vernon Recreation Staff turned over the information to the EMT's and let them take over. The woman is doing well according to her brother. She's in Victoria, waiting to get a pacemaker.

The brother told us she had suffered Sudden Death Syndrome. Sudden Death Syndrome is unexpected sudden cardiac death in people 35 and under. It is not considered a heart attack. The category for survival is less than 1% of the less than 1%

of the population who suffer from it. She has had Mytro-valve repair seven years ago. The woman's brother said that what she experienced had nothing to do with the valve surgery seven years ago.

Her Cardiac specialist had a social worker phone the team at the Recreation Centre and he passed on the specialist's appreciation for what the Staff had done. He said that the people that worked on her and made the decision to shock her most assuredly saved her life. He mentioned how appreciative the woman's family is. She has a husband and three children.

According to the woman's brother, the woman wants the community to know how well-trained the Vernon Recreation Centre staff are. Doug Ross, Manager of Recreation Services says, "I agree. We're very proud of them. We want people to know that when they come here, they're in good hands."

The guards do not want to be interviewed, they just want to carry on with their jobs.