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PHOTO CAPTION: Proving that even the youngest child can learn the valuable life-saving skill of CPR, this kindergartner got down on the floor to practice his compression technique on a manikin.

SEED Gives Families a Chance to Save a Life

SIMSBURY, CT—On February 2, 2017, “SEED Saves a Life!” was the theme of the Simsbury Enrichment & Extended Day (SEED) Family Fun Night. The SEED program, implemented at all five elementary schools in Simsbury, provides before- and after-school care in a safe, enriching environment. A few times during the school year, SEED holds events designed for the whole

family at Squadron Line School from 6:30-8:00PM, complete with complimentary pizza. One of the major benefits of these events is that they serve to bring Hartford students and their families together with Simsbury families for an evening of fun—and education, too.

Over the summer Youth Services Division Director Nikki Mahan and SEED Program Coordinator Kelly Curtis plan the Family Fun Nights for the year. Said Curtis, “One of things that stuck in our minds from the year before was when we made care packages for the men and woman serving our country. Not only did we have a great turn out but there was just something about that night, seeing the SEED families come together for a great reason.”

Mahan and Curtis didn’t have to look far to find their next “great reason.” Each summer SEED staff undergoes certification in First Aid and CPR. Considering that CPR is such an important life-saving skill that everyone should know, wondered Mahan and Curtis, why not create awareness about a new technique called “hands only CPR,” which even children as young as four years old can learn? They chose February to tie in with National Heart Month.

On this Family Fun Night, trained instructor Matt Haynes from American Medical Response (AMR) provided fun factoids about the human body and demonstrated techniques related to hands only CPR. Said Haynes, “Using a compression only technique takes away the ‘ick’ factor from resuscitation. During Sudden Cardiac Arrest [SCA], a person’s chances drop 10 percent every minute. At the time of arrest, there is enough oxygen in the body to keep it going.”

Haynes had brought a supply of plastic manikins for the SEED families to practice on, as well as music with just the right beat, setting the pace at which chest compressions should be applied in order to revive a patient. Although the SEED families had plenty of fun as they tried these new life-saving skills on the manikins, Haynes made a point to underscore the “why” of what they were doing.

Said Haynes, “LIFE is the why. You now have the ability to help somebody.”

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