



Classmate jumps into action

Lindsay Hayden's Story

Inspiring Action

Since suffering from sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) in April 2008, Lindsay Hayden and her family have been advocates for Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in schools. Working closely with the Lunger Foundation, they strive to make these life-saving devices a requirement in all schools, which she describes as a “long process.” Stanley Lake High School, where her cardiac arrest occurred, now has three AEDs, and within three weeks after her event, a charter school she previously attended secured one.

Even still, some schools lack the resource that helped save Lindsay's life.

Lindsay says doctors still don't know what triggered the SCA. However she learned after several tests that she has a condition called Long QT, which she says causes heartbeats to “back up.” Three days after the SCA, she had an internal cardiac defibrillator (IAC) implanted into her chest that acts as a pacemaker as well as a precautionary measure in the event of a future SCA.

Tests have also been performed to determine whether Lindsay's parents or brother have Long QT, revealing that no one in her family shared this trait. Lindsay is now investigating genetic testing to determine whether future children might be at increased risk for Long QT, and ultimately an SCA.

Recalling the Event

They called 911 at 11:54 a.m. on April 7, 2008. Lindsay collapsed in the classroom with her heart beating 220 times per minute. Her friend Cameron Durand performed CPR immediately. The AED shock was administered two minutes after her collapse, and two minutes before the paramedics arrived. Without the AED, “the outcome could have been devastating,” she says. She would have gone four minutes without a heartbeat and, if no one knew CPR, four minutes without oxygen. “The paramedics said, without the AED I could have died.”

Lack of Awareness

Sudden cardiac arrests are more common than people think, Lindsay says. Looking back on her life-threatening experience a year and half ago, she says “I never heard of it happening to people my age [19].

You expect it to happen to someone older or less healthy.” Since then Lindsay has met five or six people her age that have experienced SCA, and hears of countless others.

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