



Long Island Families Fight for Safer Schools, Ball Fields

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Long Island, N.Y. – In 2005, Robbie Levine was playing baseball on Long Island. As he ran across home plate, his heart stopped beating. Robbie Levine died as a result and since there were no automated external defibrillators nearby, there was little or no chance to try and revive him.

This terrible experience has motivated the Levine family to try to get defibrillators to become as well known as fire extinguishers. They have even planned with Sen. Charles Fuschillo(R-Merrick) that 2008 will be known as the “Year of the Defibrillator.”



Defibrillation is the definitive treatment for life-threatening cardiac arrest. Defibrillators are important at ball fields, in schools, office buildings, and other public places because they can deliver an electric shock to a patient’s heart, if necessary. The machine is portable and two small pads connect to the chest to determine if a shock is needed and if so - deliver an electric shock to someone in cardiac arrest. External units enable responders or bystanders to use them successfully with little, or in some cases no, training.

The Robbie Levine Foundation was created by the Levine family and they want to increase knowledge of these defibrillators and have them become a mandatory part of all youth athletic games. Because of this, more than 50 devices, costing around \$1500 each, have been donated to youth organizations across Long Island and New York.

“Defibrillators save lives. Children already wear helmets and other pads when playing sports to help prevent an injury. Now we need to raise awareness about the importance of having lifesaving safety equipment that can help prevent a tragedy. Sudden cardiac arrest can happen to anyone at anytime. If a defibrillator can save just one life and spare one family from having to live with the pain of losing a loved one, our efforts will be a success,” said Jill Levine.

Progress is being made as New York State passed a law called Louis’ Law that all schools must have a defibrillator on hand. This was after the death of Louis J. Acompa, 14, in 2000 during a lacrosse game.

“Mrs. Acompora is a woman who has suffered a great personal tragedy, but has managed to continue as a model of courage and involvement,” according to Suffolk County Legislator Lynne C. Nowick. In 2000, Louis Acompora was a young, healthy 14-year old lacrosse goalie for Northport High School when he was hit in the chest with a hard rubber ball and died at the scene. Even though he was wearing full protective gear, Louis died from Commotio Cordis, a syndrome that results from a blunt impact to the chest, which causes cardiac arrest. At that time, there were no regulations requiring automated external defibrillators (AEDS) be on the field or that coaches be trained in CPR.



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Through her Louis J. Acompora Memorial Foundation, named in memory and in honor of her son, Louis, Mrs. Karen Acompora secured passage of legislation (Louis' Law) to mandate AEDs in all public schools in the State of New York. Karen and her family, as well as their friends, have dedicated their time and energy to the implementation of AED programs at schools, on the athletic fields and at other public arenas. To date, they have saved 35 lives because of Louis' Law.

What will happen in 2008 remains to be seen, but the Levine and Acompra families are hopeful to inform and educate more people across Long Island and New York State about the importance of defibrillators. Find out more about these organizations at: Louis J. Acompora Memorial Foundation and Robbie Levine Foundation

Heartsine Technologies, Inc., a world leader in personal and public access automatic external defibrillators, is celebrating its 10th anniversary of bringing lifesaving defibrillation therapy to non-traditional areas of care.

For more information on Heartsine defibrillators, visit heartsine.com.

