

Project ADAM

Implementing AED Programs in US Schools

by Sara Silver-Traband

Project ADAM (Automated Defibrillators in Adam's Memory) began in 1999 after a series of sudden deaths among high school athletes in southeastern Wisconsin. The project namesake, Adam Lemel, was a 17-year-old high school student in Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin, who collapsed and died while playing basketball. Adam's parents, Patty Lemel and Joe Lemel, along with David Ellis, a childhood friend of Adam's, collaborated with Children's Hospital of Wisconsin to create this program in Adam's memory.

Project ADAM, a program of the Herma Heart Center at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, helps schools across the nation implement AED programs. This project helps schools determine the need for AEDs, secure funding, provide program implementation templates, provide CPR and AED training, and assist with effective marketing of the program. Project ADAM also is helping schools develop a curriculum that requires CPR/AED certification for students before high school graduation.

Currently in Wisconsin 500 schools or school districts have been served by Project ADAM. In addition, the program works to establish affiliate sites across the nation to help all schools become equipped to handle a sudden cardiac arrest. Affiliate projects now are active in Florida (Project ADAM® Florida), Philadelphia (Youth Heart Watch, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia), and Atlanta (Project SAVE).

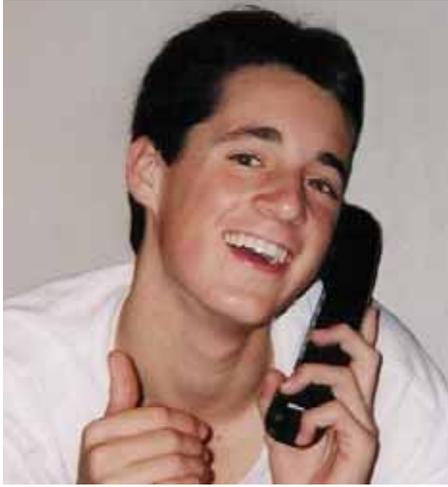


Photo courtesy of The Lemel Family.

Project ADAM in Action

The first documented life saved through Project ADAM occurred in 2004. A 56-year-old high school coach suddenly collapsed during the final moments of a highly contested basketball game. Thanks to Project ADAM, the school was prepared to deal with the emergency and had an AED and trained staff on location. Staff provided immediate CPR and defibrillation and the coach was awake and talking by the time paramedics arrived. He has made a complete recovery. Since then 9 more lives have been saved as a direct result of Project ADAM efforts.

Project ADAM, with the support and resources of Children's Hospital, provides a pediatric cardiac advisory committee to implement a unique program for sharing the most current data and information on sudden cardiac arrest incidents, with the goal to prevent sudden cardiac arrest. Stuart Berger, MD, medical director of Cardiology at the Herma Heart Center, provides

medical leadership to the project. Berger also is a professor of Pediatrics (Cardiology) at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

2001 marked the year the ADAM Act was passed by the US legislature. The act, which was named after the Project ADAM program model, supports funding of a national clearinghouse for public access defibrillation programs in schools. Senator Russ Feingold (D-WI) is now working to amend the federal budget to fund the program. If the ADAM Act is funded, schools across the country will be able to easily identify comprehensive resources for planning AED programs. The funding also will allow for increased research and awareness about sudden cardiac arrest and death in youth.

To learn more about Project ADAM, call 414-266-3889, email projectadam@chw.org, or visit the website at www.projectadam.com.

Erratum

In the Spring 2007 issue of *Currents*, an error appeared in the middle of the left column on page 4. Under the title "Relation Between Documented Rhythm and Outcome in Children and Adults" is the sentence: "First, they learned that most adults and children with in-hospital cardiac arrests had asystole or PEA (non-shockable rhythms) rather than ventricular fibrillation or *pulseless electrical activity* (shockable rhythms)."

The sentence should read: "First, they learned that most adults and children with in-hospital cardiac arrests had asystole or PEA (non-shockable rhythms) rather than ventricular fibrillation or **pulseless ventricular tachycardia** (shockable rhythms)."

Currents apologizes for the error and appreciates the readers who sent a correction.

