



SAINT FRANCIS HOSPICE

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NEWS RELEASE

Nurses and medical staff at Saint Francis Hospice are doing their bit to give heart attack victims in the Havering area a fighting chance of recovery.

Nearly 100 employees at the Havering-atte-Bower charity have signed up for the new Heartstart Havering initiative which aims to equip people with vital life-saving skills.

“The majority of our staff now know what to do in an emergency – whether they are at home, shopping or at work,” said hospice director of corporate services Adrian Shafford. “We feel this an important contribution to the community.”

He said heart and circulatory disease is the UK’s biggest killer with about 270,000 people a year suffering a heart attack.

“It takes only a few minutes for irreversible brain damage to occur after a person has stopped breathing or their heart has stopped. Someone needs to keep the casualty alive long enough for the emergency services to arrive,” he added.

The hospice staff have been taught resuscitation skills by the husband and wife team Andrew and Anneliese Attack, both first aid instructors from Hornchurch and the brains behind Heartstart Havering.

They run two-hour life-saving skills courses to teach cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) to enable the public to assist heart attack victims.

Andrew explained: “Of the many thousands of people who suffer a heart attack each year, 46 per cent of these are fatal of which 30 per cent die before they have even reached hospital.

“Early administration of CPR doubles the chance of survival, but often a member of the public with no medical expertise is first on the scene.”

Heartstart Havering has been established by a group of local volunteers to allow any member of the public who lives or works in the Havering area to receive this essential training free of charge – although donations are welcome.

“We want to continue to raise public awareness about this important issue,” said Andrew, an I.T. manager. “So we would like more individuals to take advantage of the scheme.”

He and Anneliese, a pharmaceutical technician, also intend to offer their services to the corporate sector in the future.

The couple, who met through the Romford St. John Ambulance, are committed to helping increase the level of life-saving skills within the community.

“We think Saint Francis staff have been brilliant,” said Andrew. “They have really taken our message to heart.”

The hospice staff have been taking part in the course over the past few months and have even committed to a rolling programme of refresher training.

“We see it as a citizenship commitment,” said Adrian Shafford. “It is worth remembering that 70 per cent of all heart attacks happen outside hospital and 70 per cent of such attacks happen in the home.

“The first person on the scene of a heart attack, therefore, is likely to be a relative or close friend – but only 1 per cent of the population has received training in emergency life support.”

Anyone interested in Heartstart Havering should ring 01708-742566 or send an e-mail to Heartstart@havering.org.uk

Our picture shows, left to right, Anneliese, auxiliary nurses Sandra Davies and Helen Francis, and Andrew.

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FURTHER INFORMATION:

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