

# Arizona leads way in new CPR technique

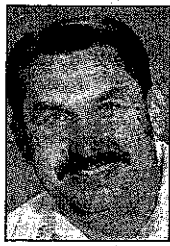
**W**hen you think of an active 36-year-old man with young children, the first words that come to mind probably aren't "cardiac arrest." That's exactly what happened to Russell Vossbrink last year. He was at work when his heart stopped beating. He had suffered a sudden cardiac arrest. He was dead. Fortunately, an innovative system was in place to help bring him back to life. A co-worker initiated CPR, someone grabbed and used an automated external defibrillator and specially trained Phoenix firefighters were at Russell's side in minutes. When the emergency workers arrived, they started a new form of CPR we believe will be the standard for our kids and grandkids. It's called continuous chest compression CPR, and Arizona is the first state with an organized protocol for saving people like Russell.

**OUR TURN**

Medical publications such as the *Journal of the American Medical Association* have highlighted how the technique has

tripled survival rates in Arizona. The Phoenix Fire Department is working closely with the Arizona Department of Health Services to train the public, along with emergency dispatchers and paramedics.

- First, a few facts:
- » Sudden cardiac arrest claims about a dozen lives every day in Arizona — often with no symptoms.
  - » Studies have shown continuous chest compression CPR done by bystanders at least triples survival rates.
  - » Phoenix 911 dispatchers give instructions over the phone on how to do it.
  - » Fire Department emergency responders are using the technique for adults who suddenly collapse.
  - » Arizona has a unique system for designating hospitals with specific capabilities as Cardiac Arrest Centers.
- Continuous chest compression CPR is really easy. If you see an adult who sud-



**Bob Khan**



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- denly collapses and is not breathing normally:
- » Call or get someone to call 911.
  - » Start pushing on the victim's chest — hard and fast — 100 times per minute.
  - » If you get tired, make sure someone else takes over.
  - » If there is defibrillator, simply attach the pads and follow the commands.
  - » Don't stop pumping even if the victim starts gasping or opens his eyes.
  - » Your efforts cannot hurt the person — all you can do is help.
- Continuous chest compression CPR is not for children younger than 8 or drowning victims or in respiratory emergencies. Traditional CPR, with mouth-to-mouth breathing and chest compressions, is needed in those cases.
- The Arizona Department of Health Services sent a "how-to" kit to 1,800 Arizona schools. See details at [re.gov. Check it out — your kids have. And there's a way you can help now. Bystander CPR and a defibrillator were key in saving Russell's life. Please urge your state representatives to pass House Bill 2399, which gives protections to people who use defibrillators. It's a vital step in assuring these lifesaving devices are available in more public places. Some call Russell's survival a miracle. In fact, it's the result of the coordinated system of care for cardiac-arrest victims Arizona is pioneering. Russell's wife, Anne, sums it up best: "It really is not possible to express how grateful I am to have my husband back and to know our little boy won't miss any tickles from Daddy and our baby girl will get to giggle while he makes funny faces at her for years to come."

\*Bob Khan is Phoenix fire chief. Dr. Ben Bobrow is medical director of the Arizona Department of Health Services' Bureau of EMS & Trauma System and an emergency physician at Mayo Clinic Hospital.\*](http://www.azsha-</a></p>
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