

Free CPR Classes Return for Edwardsville, Glen Carbon ‘Start With the Heart’ Effort

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EDWARDSVILLE – The Edwardsville Fire Department and Glen Carbon Fire Protection District will once again offer free CPR classes throughout the month of February to encourage as many people as possible to learn this life-saving technique. “Start With the Heart” will provide a series of weeknight and weekend opportunities to learn and practice basic cardiopulmonary resuscitation techniques and other skills.

Participants will attend one free two-hour session. The first classes will get underway on Saturday, February 3, and be offered again on Tuesdays and Saturdays through the end of February. The free series of classes debuted in February 2023, on the heels of a CPR

success story in Edwardsville that led to commendations for members of the public and first responders. In 2022, both departments implemented an enhanced form of CPR intended to boost the speed and efficiency of their response to cardiac incidents. Edwardsville Fire Chief James Whiteford said the enhanced CPR has proven vital for people suffering cardiac arrest, but what happens prior to paramedics' arrival is also essential. And that's why the free CPR classes are important.

"We've had several successful CPR examples in the past year. We see living proof on a regular basis how valuable CPR skills are, and that's why we want to reach as many people in the community as we can," he said. "CPR techniques also have been updated and no longer require mouth-to-mouth breathing."

The Start With the Heart classes will cover CPR basics, utilizing a compressions-only version with no mouth-to-mouth breathing. Whiteford said both techniques are effective in cardiac situations. The class also will emphasize the importance of quickly calling 911, and instruct in the use of an AED, or automated external defibrillator, which is a portable medical device that is becoming more common in offices and public buildings. The free Tuesday night classes will take place from 6-8 p.m. in the R.P. Lumber Center community room, 6289 Tiger Drive in Edwardsville, on February 6, 13, 20 and 27.

The free Saturday morning classes will take place from 9-11 a.m. at Glen Carbon Fire Station No. 1, 199 S. Main Street, Glen Carbon on February 3, 10 and 17. Additionally, a Saturday morning session will take place from 9-11 a.m. February 24 at the Edwardsville Public Safety Building, 333 S. Main Street. A maximum of 20 people, ages 14 and older, can be accommodated per session. Priority will be given to those who live or work in Edwardsville and Glen Carbon. To reserve a spot in one of the free sessions, sign up online at: www.cityofedwardsville.com/startwiththeheart or contact the Edwardsville Fire Department at 618-692-7540