

## CERT team on quest to teach hands-only CPR

Jack Cruikshank and his friends have set a goal and they could use your help.

Cruikshank, John McGee and Paul Fitch are members of the Greater Green Valley Community Emergency Response Team, or CERT, which is part of FEMA's Citizens Corp.

They and other members of CERT train regularly and respond to emergency situations in Green Valley.

Over the next year, the men hope to train 220 to 240 people in Green Valley how to use an automated external defibrillator and perform hands-only CPR.

They are on the hunt for HOAs and other organizations willing to host the free one-hour American Heart Association course.

*"The whole reason we want to do this is to expose people to the training, get more people comfortable, because one of the myths about CPR is a lot of people know it and would feel comfortable doing it when in fact that's not the case," Cruikshank said.*

*"People are often uncomfortable performing CPR because they're afraid they'll hurt the patient, they're unsure of what to do or they think they'll be sued if the patient doesn't survive", he said. "Coming to a class, being able to practice and seeing other people practice will give people confidence to jump in should the need arise".*

Fitch also pointed out that Arizona has an "incredibly good" Good Samaritan Law.

*"You can't get sued for providing aid except for gross negligence, and I tell my classes, that means that if you try to do an appendectomy without going to medical school, that's gross negligence," Fitch said. "Just doing CPR and you break a rib or you pull a victim out of a car wreck and injure them, you're OK, you can't be sued."*

So, why hands-only CPR? Does the American Heart Association recommend hands-only CPR over



Greater Green Valley Community Emergency Response Team members Paul Fitch, Jack Cruikshank and John McGee (from left) take 30 pounds of gear with them to their classes.

traditional CPR? The answer is no, traditional CPR where people provide 30 compressions for every two breaths is still the preferred method.



CERT member John McGee demonstrates the proper way to do chest compressions.

*"However, the interest in hands-only CPR increased during COVID-19 when people were trying to socially distance", Cruikshank said.*

*"The reason for breaths is you need to have oxygen in your blood and the most significant part of CPR are the compressions, getting the heart going and pumping, but the oxygen in your blood will dissipate, so if you don't have a face mask to use or you don't feel comfortable doing a mouth-to-mouth, then it's more important that you at least get compressions going and started until emergency services can get there," Cruikshank said.*

Just a few weeks ago, Cruikshank said they met an older Quail Creek resident who had recently performed hands-only CPR on a woman until paramedics arrived.

*"They told him, 'That five minutes or so of you doing that probably or most definitely contributed to her survival.' I mean, what better kind of testimonial can you get than that?" Cruikshank said.*

The trio will also be teaching how to use AEDs, which are being installed in increasingly more places.

While CPR is a procedure to keep the blood pumping when the heart stops, AEDs get the heart started again after it stops.

According to the American Heart Association, the survival rate of victims nearly doubles when an AED is used with CPR.

When someone's heart suddenly stops beating (cardiac arrest) an AED can administer a shock that will prompt it to start beating again.

*"What's great about AEDs is they provide verbal prompts every step of the way, beginning with where to place the pads", McGee said. It also isn't going to tell you to administer a shock unless it analyzes the patient and determines one needs to be administered.*

The men said they want as many people trained to do CPR and AEDs as possible. Even those who don't have the physical strength to do chest compressions can guide others as they perform the life-saving measure.

Eventually, CERT also hopes to be able to hold its CPR/AED classes in Spanish.



Jack Cruikshank of the Greater Green Valley Community Emergency Response Team shows off an AED, or automated external defibrillator.