

My child? No! Not my child!

by Sharon Bates

The phone rings in the middle of the afternoon, you answer it without a thought, a voice on the other end says, rush to the hospital, your child collapsed on the playing field and is in critical condition.

It's something I hope you never have to experience. However, for at least 20 sets of parents in Arizona, this horrifying phone call was received because their child collapsed from Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA). Every three days across America, a parent hears that their healthy child died on the playing field. The loss of any young life is heartbreaking, even more so when loss of life could have been prevented.

Are Your Children Heart Healthy?

SCA can affect young athletes from 8 to 35 years old. As parents, there are many issues that we worry about but very rarely do we think of our children's hearts.

Almost half of the reported youth deaths are related to the heart condition Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM). This genetic condition causes the heart to enlarge abnormally. Dr. Barry Maron, the leading HCM heart specialist in the United States reports that 1 in 500 young people have this condition. Young athletes with undetected heart abnormalities are at high risk of a deadly Sudden Cardiac Arrest. Even young professional athletes can, and have, died from SCA. Early detection of this heart condition and many others can offer life-saving alternatives.

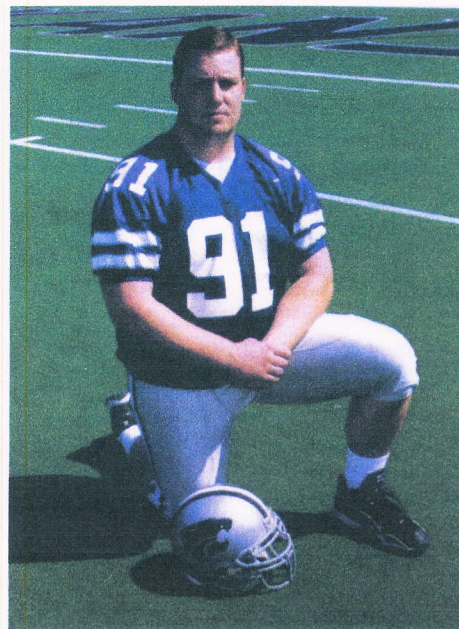
Warning signs of heart disease in young people

- Chest pains
- Dizziness
- Light headedness
- Fainting
- Racing heart or heart palpitations
- Shortness of breath

You have probably heard that one of the highest causes of death in our country is heart disease. Over 350,000 people die each year from SCA — better known as “heart attack.” Factor in stroke-caused deaths, and this number almost doubles. The Center for Disease Control and the Heart Rhythm Society estimate 7,000 to 14,000 young people under the age of 19 die each year from SCA.

However, many of these deaths can be prevented. Simple cardiac screening tests can prevent many of these deaths. Using normal protocols for heart exams in hospital or outpatient facilities, the American Heart Association estimates the cost in excess of \$2 billion per year to screen our 10-million high school athletes.

Student athletes, however, are but a small percentage of the young people dying each



year from SCA. We should be concerned about all the young people dying from this detectable disease. I passionately believe that it is time to find a more cost effective way to screen all children and adults in our country.

Nine years ago, if I had known that my only child, my 20-year-old son, had a heart condition, life would be different today. Anthony was taking the first steps of his adult life, stretching his wings and flying from the nest. Enrolled in Kansas State University and participating in its football program, he was a star athlete and an academic honor student when he died in July 2000.

What if I would have known the sporadic and seemingly explainable dizziness, chest pains, fainting, and racing heart were symptoms of a heart condition — not over-exertion — how different my life would be today.

Anthony is the reason I tell parents today to get their children checked and the reason I formed the Anthony Bates Foundation. Today, the Anthony Bates Foundation, which was created in 2002, has become a pioneer and leader for cardiac screening programs for kids. We directly provided more than 5,000 echocardiograms (ultrasound) and almost as many ECGs (electrocardiogram) for young people since our inception. Our figures show more than 10 percent of the young people screened have undiagnosed heart problems. These families are now experiencing the rewards of life-saving information.

The ever-growing Foundation is now expanding. In 2008, the Texas Education

Protect your child at school

- Find out if your child's school has an Automatic External Defibrillators (AED)
- Understand the school's emergency plan for a sudden cardiac arrest occurrence on campus
- Learn how many AED-trained personnel are on campus in case of an Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA)
- Know the location of the AEDs
- Determine if the AED is publicly accessible



Agency on Health and Safety invited us to create a legislative pilot program screening their kids. We created a Community Screening Training Program to support the efforts of the many who are interested in providing screenings for young people.

Last year marked our launch of the Low Cost Cardiac Screening Program for people of any age. Each member of your family can be screened via ultrasound and ECG tests for a donation of just \$75.

The Foundation has another program for

free cardiac screening. Using volunteers and donated equipment, we are able to provide cardiac screenings at no cost. Donations through these programs help us raise funds for schools to acquire automatic external defibrillators (AED) to make sure the schools are ready for any emergencies.

The next such event will be held in Mesa, at the Cardon Children's Medical Center, on Saturday, Aug. 29. The top three

schools participating in this Cardiac Screening event will win an AED for their school. Pre-registration appointments are recommended and a suggested donation of \$30 will help provide funds for the AEDs.

For more information visit our Web site or call us at (602) 482-5606. You can make a difference for your family's heart health. Know the warning signs, be a tenacious advocate for your child's heart health screening, and become a supporter to require AEDs in

public places, sporting events, playing fields, and all Arizona schools. Become a champion for heart screening today. **K&S**

Sharon Bates is the founder of the Anthony Bates Foundation. Created in 2002, the Anthony Bates Foundation has become a pioneer and leader for cardiac screening programs for children nationwide. For more information, please call (602) 482-5606 or visit www.anthonybates.org.

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Anthony Bates Foundation HEART SCREENING EVENT

See those 18 kids playing baseball? One child in the line-up and one in the field have a detectable heart condition. Are you willing to risk that your child is that one? Rather than wonder about it, take advantage of The Anthony Bates Foundation Banner Health Heart Health Screening Event. For a donation about the cost of a doctor office co-pay, \$30, your child's cardiovascular system can be screened at this Mesa event. This could save your child's life!

As parents, we want to do the right thing for a child's health, but who considers that a child could have heart disease? It would seem to be rare, but The Anthony Bates Foundation Heart Health screenings find more than 10% of the children we screen have a treatable heart condition.

Our event sponsors and volunteers are dedicated to this screening event to detect Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM), an enlarged heart condition that

leads to athlete deaths during and after sporting events. Modern painless, non-intrusive medical equipment is made available and used by trained volunteers and cardiac specialists.

This low cost screening, with results reviewed and discussed between you, your child, and a Banner Health cardiologist is available to children, young athletes, and young adults from ages 12 to 22.

Some proceeds from the donations go to purchase Automatic External Defibrillators for area schools to provide emergency treatment when the unthinkable happens. The balance of the donations are used to provide future Heart Health screenings. Help us help others just like your family by supporting our Heart Health mission.

This is an opportunity for the life of your child.

Where: Cardon Children's Medical Center
Education Center

1400 S. Dobson Rd., Mesa, AZ 85202

When: Saturday, August 29; 8 am to 5 p.m.

Pre-registration: on line at: www.Anthonybates.org

Pre-register & donate to hold your appointment

For more information call (602) 482-5606 or e-mail: appts@anthonybates.org

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