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ST John thinks lives will be saved by teaching CPR to 1,000 Invercargill secondary school pupils, thanks to the ILT and the ILT Foundation's support.

That's the feeling from Invercargill St John area manager, Kathy Reece, about the innovative first aid education programme that will proceed thanks to \$55,000 in funding from the Invercargill Licensing Trust and the ILT Foundation.

"The merit to this is obvious because it will definitely save lives. There's no question about that," Mrs Reece said.

Next year's programme will see 16 and 17-year-old students from the five Invercargill secondary schools receive four hours free training from St John personnel in basic first aid skills, including CPR.

Trust president, Alan Dennis, said funding St John's training, especially the life-saving resuscitation technique, was a vital learning tool for our city's youth and a crucial community well-being project.

"This scheme also follows last year's initiative with St John where the ILT Foundation provided \$186,000 towards buying and installing defibrillators, as well as providing training for 500 people to use the equipment," he said.

"And we saw the benefit to that almost straight away when one of the portable defibrillators was used to save the life of Georgetown Bowling Club greenkeeper, Russell Morrison, after he collapsed while mowing the club's green."

Mrs Reece applauded the ILT and ILT Foundation's vision for supporting the school students' first aid training.

"Everybody should be trained up in first aid. Full stop," she stressed.

"This age-group that will receive the training are getting ready to go out to the workforce, or to take up university study out of town and they'll soon be parents. So it is an important life skill that they really need to be looking at."

The training of 1000 students is also a significant figure because each year more than that number of New Zealanders of all ages go into cardiac arrest outside a hospital, and many don't survive.

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