



Young Hearts for Life

The *Young Hearts for Life* (YH4L) Cardiac Screening Program identifies high school and college students at risk for sudden cardiac death. Each week sudden cardiac death claims the lives of more than 60 young adults in the United States.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and in Illinois. YH4L, under the guidance of Dr. Joseph Marek, a clinical cardiologist, seeks to detect young adults at risk for sudden cardiac death, and increase community awareness of this devastating problem. YH4L does this by providing **FREE** ECGs that can identify those heart conditions that can cause sudden death.

A number of cardiac conditions can result in sudden death. An electrocardiogram (ECG) can detect certain impulse patterns or “markers” associated with these conditions that a stethoscope cannot. HCM (hypertrophic cardiomyopathy), WPW (Wolff-Parkinson-White Syndrome), Long QT Syndrome, ARVD (arrhythmogenic right ventricular dysplasia) and Brugada Syndrome are the most common cardiac conditions causing sudden death that can be detected by ECG.

In 2004, the International Olympic Committee and the European Society of Cardiology recommended that athletes under the age of 35 be screened with an ECG **every 2 years** before participation in sports. Medical experts in the U.S. have not adopted the European recommendations for ECG testing, as a result there are no routine screening programs for these conditions in the U.S.

YH4L, by working with area high schools and colleges, offers ECG testing to all students *free-of-charge*. To date, over 150,000 students have been screened and hundreds of young adults have been identified with previously unsuspected, life threatening, cardiac conditions.

Screening consists of a quick, simple, painless ECG. Volunteers attach electrodes to the students’ chest and limbs in preparation for the ECG. The ECG machine monitors the electrical activity of the heart and prints out the information about heart rate and rhythm. A trained cardiologist then interprets the printed ECG. The false abnormal rate for our program is less than 2%. This rate is better than the false abnormal rate for most other screenings in healthcare.

For more information, visit our website at www.YH4L.org Young Hearts for life is a 501C3 tax exempt organization.

“.... To save one life, is as if you have saved the world.”