

# RichmondNews

## Kickstart the heart

### Richmond delegation taking defibrillators to Thailand

Michelle Hopkins, Richmond News  
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In four days, my son Jeffrey and I, along with 13 others, will board a plane and head on an emotional journey to Thailand for two and a half weeks.

This humanitarian trip has been years in the making.

You might remember stories in the Richmond News about Noah Yelizarov, an energetic young man who died just shy of his 19th birthday in a freak accident in Phuket, October 2004.

Noah was a beloved Richmond hockey goalie who was electrocuted when he inadvertently touched a live wire.

At the time, local fire fighters told the family that Noah might have been saved had the Thai emergency personnel, who first attended to Noah, had a defibrillator --a portable device which shocks the heart and allows it to reestablish an effective rhythm.

When his heartbroken parents, Lori and Michael Yelizarov, heard this, Michael vowed one day he would get the lifesaving devices to Thai emergency responders.

Last December, six bright yellow defibrillators were purchased and engraved with the words "Noah's 2010 Journey," and presented to Firefighters Without Borders Canada.

"By sending defibrillators, maybe we can save a life so no other parent has to suffer the pain of losing a son like we did," Michael said.

"The local firefighters, as well as Firefighters Without Borders, will train Thai emergency personnel on the use of the defibrillators."

The trip is also about honouring Noah and his charitable nature, said Michael on Dec. 30, 2009, when the defibrillators were handed to the firefighters.

"We are reaching out in Noah's name across the ocean to show to the world if we work together the world can be a better place," said Michael.



Brian Hutchinson of Firefighters Without Borders accepts six defibrillators from the Yelizarov family. A Richmond delegation is taking them to Thailand, where they are being donated in the memory of Noah Yelizarov, who was electrocuted in Phuket in 2004.

"I want to give this gift of life to my brothers and sisters in Thailand."

The funds to purchase these defibrillators came from money raised during the Fifth Annual Noah Yelizarov Memorial 3-on-3 Hockey Tournament, which was held Aug. 23, 2009 at the Richmond Ice Centre. More than \$30,000 was raised.

While in Phuket, we will be visiting orphanages and hospitals. We will also be combining work with pleasure as the Thai government has many activities planned for us, including snorkeling and a visit to an elephant reserve.

So we are off, a group of close friends and family members as well as four members of Firefighters Without Borders Canada, Richmond Fire Rescue fire captain, Fred Klomp (who is a longtime family friend), and local fire fighters Jason Pinkney and Al McGrath. My son Jeffrey, 24, and a budding journalist and myself will be reporting from Thailand twice a week until our return on April 1. The first instalment of our journey will be in the Friday, March 19 issue of the Richmond News.