

## USchool Student Breathes New Life into CPR Training Techniques

Shari Kumar, a 17-year-old University School student, has witnessed firsthand the importance of hands-only cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Her friend, who constantly suffered from fainting episodes due to a heart condition, became the motivation behind Kumar's efforts to raise awareness about heart conditions and help prevent cardiac-arrest deaths. "I began researching. I wanted to do something about it."



So Kumar, in 10th grade at the time, got involved by successfully establishing an American Red Cross Club in USchool's Upper School, making it her goal to bring hands-only CPR training to her own peers. According to the American Red Cross (ARC), hands-only CPR is a potentially lifesaving technique involving no mouth to mouth contact and best used in emergencies where someone has seen another person suddenly collapse. ARC says the technique increases the likelihood of a person surviving cardiac emergencies that occur outside medical settings, which is important because four out of five cardiac arrests happen at home.

Kumar's science project, titled "Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest: Does Neighborhood Matter in Bystander CPR Response?" revealed that low-income and predominately minority, mostly African-American, neighborhoods reported a disproportionately high rate of cardiac arrests and disproportionately low bystander CPR. As a result of her research, Kumar has resolved to raise awareness and increase survival rates in these neighborhoods. "I want to work with the Red Cross to train those neighborhoods specifically," she said.

Kumar wants to raise awareness for the general public, but first, her efforts would start at school. On March 25, her hard work paid off when she successfully organized a hands-only CPR training for more than 600 USchool students. The event was well-attended and publicized, even garnering media coverage by the Fox News TV channel. "USchool is the pioneer in South Florida by getting the entire Upper School trained," she said. "I want to do this [training] every year."

With all her recent accomplishments, Kumar has no plans to slow down anytime soon. She traveled to Orlando on April 8 to compete in the state-level science competition because her project won first place in the Medical and Health category at the 2014 Broward County Science Fair. She won 6th place



Shari Kumar, 17, at left

at the 2014 Florida State Science and Engineering Fair.

Kumar also is busy contemplating the next step in her journey. "I want [hands-only CPR training] to be a graduation requirement in Florida," she said. "My vision is to create a whole generation of life savers."