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Lee Health and The School District of Lee County Install Lifesaving Devices in Schools
*Donation from Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida Provides AEDs
for all Lee County Middle and Elementary Schools*

(Fort Myers, Fla. – Aug. 24, 2018) --- In a joint press conference, Lee Health and The School District of Lee County announced the installation of automated external defibrillators (AED) in all county middle and elementary schools. The AEDs were purchased with a \$150,000 donation from Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida, and every school in the district has earned the Project Adam Heart Safe designation.

Project Adam began in 1999 following the death of a student in Wisconsin who suffered from sudden cardiac arrest while playing basketball. To earn the Heart Safe designation, schools must implement an awareness, training and response program to be prepared in case of a cardiac episode. The initiative to install the devices and train response teams in Lee County was a team effort between Lee Health, The School District of Lee County, Project Adam and the Lee County Department of Public Safety. Last December, Fort Myers High School freshman Zac Syska suffered from a sudden cardiac arrest while running with his team, and his life was saved by an AED. As part of his Eagle Scout service project, Syska spent his summer vacation this year assisting the school district in earning the heart safe designation.

"More often than not, sudden cardiac arrest in children and adolescents occurs without prior symptoms or warning. Thankfully an AED and trained operator saved Zac's life. He is our inspiration. The devices being donated today will make the schools in our region safer and the training provided by our EMS partners will help staff better prepare for potential life-threatening emergencies. A heartfelt thank you to the Golisano Children's Hospital donors and all of our community partners who made today possible," said Armando Llechu, Chief Administrative Officer of Golisano Children's Services.

Every school also has a team of 3-5 staff members who underwent training on the proper use of the devices and how to implement an emergency plan at their schools. As schools are often used as shelters or host visitors, the AEDs are equipped with both pediatric and adult-sized pads.

"The immediate use of an AED can be lifesaving if needed during an Emergency Cardiac Response," said Sue Grohs, Assistant Director of Health Services for The Lee County School District. "Only high schools were equipped with an AED, and now all elementary schools, middle schools, and special centers will also have an AED in a quickly accessible location. The District is very grateful to Golisano Children's Hospital for this very generous gift."

Initiatives like [Project Adam](#) are funded through Lee Health Foundation's [Little Red Wagon Fund](#).

PHOTO CAPTIONS: 5963 - Lee County Department of Public Safety provided AED training to school faculty; 5983 - LtoR: Dr. Eric Eason, Zac Syska, Armando Llechu

About Lee Health

Since the opening of the first hospital in 1916, Lee Health has been a health care leader in Southwest Florida, constantly evolving to meet the needs of the community. A non-profit, integrated health care services organization, Lee Health is committed to the well-being of every individual served, focused on healthy living and maintaining good health. Staffed by caring people, inspiring health, services are conveniently located throughout the community in four acute care hospitals, two specialty hospitals, outpatient centers, walk-in medical centers, primary care and specialty physician practices and other services across the continuum of care. Formerly known as Lee Memorial Health System, the organization began its second century of service with a new name in 2016. Learn more at www.LeeHealth.org.