



More defibrillators for the Bay

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9-year-old identical twins Valerie (l) and Alexis (r) Thompson visit with Rocco Rossi, CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Valerie and her family are familiar with the services of the foundation as she has a hole in her heart.

Rocco Rossi, CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario stopped off in North Bay for lunch on Thursday.

Rossi is on a 1,900 km bike ride along Yonge Street, Canada's longest street, to raise awareness of the Heart & Stroke Chase McEachern Tribute Fund in support of AED's (Automated External Cardiac Defibrillators).

Chase McEachern was an 11-year-old boy with a heart condition known as 'atrial flutter', discovered by doctors after a sporting injury sent him to hospital.

After learning that his hero Jiri Fischer collapsed on the ice and Mario Lemieux retired because of irregular heartbeats like his, McEachern started a campaign to make AEDs as common place as fire extinguishers in hockey arenas and schools.

McEachern even sent a letter to Don Cherry drumming up support. Unfortunately on February 9th, before he could hear Cherry read the letter, he collapsed during gym class, and six days he died.

Rossi moved by the young man's determination took up the challenge and began his trek across the province. He started in Rainy River and is scheduled to finish in Toronto on May 31.

During the stop, Rossi was happy to announce that thanks to the fundraising efforts and a three million-dollar investment by the province, North Bay will receive five more defibrillators.

Four of the units will be placed in area high schools with a second being installed at the Gardens.

Rossi has cycled an average of 100 kilometres per day.

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