



**Drayton Hall Elementary
School**

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Media Release

Drayton Hall named Heart Safe School

West Ashley, S.C. - Drayton Hall Elementary School was recently named a "Designated Heart Safe School" through Project ADAM. [Project ADAM](#) is named for Adam Lemel, a 17-year-old who went into cardiac arrest while playing basketball. Project Adam assists schools in creating a plan to respond to sudden cardiac arrest in their school.

Drayton Hall is the first elementary school in Charleston County School District (CCSD), and in the state, to become certified. Under the guidance and encouragement of school nurse Alysia Upchurch, all staff were trained on what to do during a cardiac emergency and how to use the AED machines.

Project ADAM provides the foundation for a school to develop and sustain their program, including planning templates, a reference manual and one-on-one consultation.

With support from Principal Brian Agnew, Upchurch used a Cardiac Emergency Response Plan template, provided by the district's Nursing Services Department individualized to each school's needs. The success of her quality sudden cardiac arrest program of awareness, training and effective emergency response to promote a safe environment for students, visitors and staff as outlined within the [Heart Safe School Checklist was recognized last month.](#)

Tara Lawson a representative of the MUSC Pediatric Cardiac Unit and Project ADAM leader for South Carolina, trained the staff and provided one on one consultation with our school nurse and administration. The staff was able to successfully implement a quality sudden cardiac arrest care response to become designated as a Heart Safe School.

"Tara Lawson was a guest speaker at a CCSD Nursing Services event and I knew immediately that Drayton Hall needed to get certified," said Upchurch. "We have students and staff with heart conditions here and with my background in emergency response, I knew we could get this off the ground."

Like all CCSD schools and facilities, Drayton Hall has an emergency response team of first responders trained in the use of a defibrillator and other basic medical techniques. Upchurch began by getting buy-in from that group of staff and administrators. It did not take long for every staff member to agree to be trained.

"Each member is capable and able," said Upchurch. "I was beyond impressed. Everyone knows their role and I consider it a well-oiled machine."

Most high schools and several middle schools in CCSD hold the designation and Executive Director of Nursing Services Ellen Nitz is actively encouraging all CCSD schools to follow suit.

"I am so proud of our team and their ability to jump in without any medical experience and do it so perfectly," said Upchurch. "I could not do this without them and I appreciate their efforts."

For more information, contact Principal Brian Agnew at (843) 852-0678.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 50,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse portfolio of educational options and specialized programs delivered to the students of CCSD through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools and programs. Rich educational opportunities for students include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; military; dual credit; and many more.