



Smiling Hearts: The Nick Blakely Foundation

Our vision is to turn every potential tragedy of Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) into a story of survival.



Nick's Story

Nick Blakely was a student Stetson University football player and a 2016 graduate of Archer High School. On Aug. 28, 2017, Nick complained of feeling dizzy during practice. He was sidelined by the coach when he collapsed and later died at the hospital. The 19-year-old had never experienced any warning signs before that day, and after he collapsed the people around him were so confused about what was happening that they believed he was having a seizure. Unbeknownst to Nick, his family, or his coaches, he had an enlarged heart, which led to SCA, his ultimate cause of death.

Approximately 7,000 children, age 18 or younger, experience an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest every year. SCA is the leading cause of death of student-athletes during sports and exercise.

Know the Warning Signs

Although SCA often occurs suddenly and unexpectedly, it is essential to know the symptoms; such as fainting or seizures during exercise, unexplained shortness of breath, dizziness, extreme fatigue, a racing heart, the sudden and unexplained death of a family member under the age of 50 (SIDS, drowning, single auto accident).

What to Do in an Emergency

- Call 9-1-1 for emergency medical services.
- Access an automated external defibrillator if one is available and use it as soon as it arrives.
- Begin CPR immediately and continue until professional emergency medical services arrive.
- If two people are available to help, one should begin CPR immediately while the other calls 9-1-1 and find an AED.

Advocates for State/Federal Legislation

Smiling Hearts is actively partnering with local legislators in Georgia to introduce SCA awareness legislation. January 25, 2018, the Jeremy Nelson and Nick Blakely Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act (HB 743) was introduced to the Georgia General Assembly.

Our Mission

A young athlete dies every 72 hours from SCA, but we believe these tragedies can be prevented. We believe this is possible by:

- Advancing overall awareness to young athletes, parents, and coaches,
- Providing youth, schools, and organizations with access to preventative heart screenings and life-saving automated external defibrillators (AED),
- Implementing training standards and safety protocols in athletic associations and educational institutions,
- Advocating for the establishment of legislation supporting SCA standardized requirements.

Help Us Make a Difference

To make a lasting difference, we must have active community involvement. Learn more about our foundation at www.nickblakelyfoundation.org; become an advocate for SCA awareness, give a charitable donation, volunteer with us. We want to work with you to save lives!

Donate an AED

It is crucial that victims that collapse into cardiac arrest receive medical attention as soon as possible, including CPR or the application of an AED. However, some schools and organizations cannot afford to place an AED onsite. Smiling Hearts' goal is to make these life-saving devices available in the community. The cost of an AED is \$1,700; help us make sure an AED is available during a cardiac tragedy.

Screen a Child

1 in 300 youth has an undetected heart condition that puts them at risk for SCA. We believe that heart screenings should be a standard of care. Therefore, Smiling Hearts supports preventative heart screenings that can help detect deadly cardiac conditions that may place youth at risk of experiencing SCA.

We have partnered with SafeBeat as our exclusive preventative heart screening collaborative partner. One person can easily sponsor One child for as little as \$1 per week to potentially save one child's life. For more information visit: www.safebeat.org/onetoone.