Bristol Bears receive specialist CPR training from the GWAAC crew

Thursday 21 June, 2018

On Wednesday June 20th, a team of orange-suited medics from the Great Western Air Ambulance Charity (GWAAC) visited the Bristol Bears training ground to teach the team essential life support skills.

Head coach Pat Lam was keen for the players and staff to receive training in life-saving CPR, saying "you never know when someone around you is going to need your help, and by learning a few simple skills nearly everyone can become a potential lifesaver."

The GWAAC crew are all highly skilled in providing this type of treatment, as the team is made up of Consultant Doctors and Specialist Paramedics in Critical Care. They take the skills and equipment more usually found in an A&E department to the scene of a medical incident or accident. In 2017, GWAAC were called out to 1,824 jobs for the 2.1 million people in Bristol, Bath & North East Somerset, North Somerset, Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire.

Last year, GWAAC's Great Western Heart Starters team trained over 1,000 children in CPR, with the aim of creating a new generation of local lifesavers.

GWAAC Lead Doctor, Matt Thomas, said: "We always welcome an invitation to teach CPR and it is very important to myself and the crew. We see every day how having these simple skills really can save lives. It is a clear strategy in that the more people who can deliver CPR the more people we can save."

Matt continued: "We adapt each session to the needs of the participants, but on this occasion we were a bit worried about whether our manikins, all called Annie, would cope with the strength and weight of the Bristol Bears! (No Annies were harmed during the training!)."

Joe Hughes, GWAAC's lead fundraiser in Bristol, said: "It is always interesting to witness the crew deliver CPR training. It was a bit of fun seeing the GWAAC mascot Charlie the Critical Care Bear finally meet some real bears; he's not used to meeting people as big as he is! But the crew take the training very seriously and you really can see how important it is to them to teach these skills far and wide."

For more information on GWAAC and how you can help, please do visit our website www.gwaac.com

ENDS

Notes for editors

- On 3rd June 2018 the charity celebrated ten years since its first flight.
- We need to raise over £3 million each year to stay operational, but receive no day to day funding from the Government or National Lottery.
- In 2017 GWAAC launched the Great Western Heart Starters programme. Great Western Heart Starters is a training programme for school pupils in years 8-10. Our vision is to create a region of heart starters who can confidently administer CPR and use an AED (*Automated External Defibrillator)* should they ever find themselves in a situation where it's needed.

For further information, contact:

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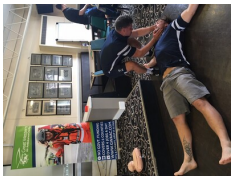
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