

## **Start Me Up BC - Tourism Vancouver**

St. John Ambulance BC & Yukon is set to kick off a campaign that will allow everyone across British Columbia save lives from sudden cardiac arrest.

The campaign, called Start Me Up BC, is a 2021 initiative, with the first event planned for Surrey at Crescent Beach. To support the launch, St. John Ambulance is going to be joined by a variety of special guests and speakers. This includes municipal, provincial and federal government members, sudden cardiac arrest survivors, and even two special Olympic athletes!

The campaign is centered around bystander accessibility to automated external defibrillators (AEDs), which is a lightweight, portable device that delivers a shock through the chest wall of a person whose heart has stopped beating. In the event of sudden cardiac arrest, CPR paired with an AED can increase the chance of survival upwards of 75%.

These lifesaving devices are crucial to protect those residing in BC, as well as those visiting from other provinces and countries. The tourism industry is an incredible value here in BC, with thousands of must-see spots across the province, many of those being in Vancouver. In 2019, there were over six million international visitors, which is six million extra people that at any given moment could be at risk of a cardiac health emergency.

“Nearly 80 per cent of sudden cardiac arrests occur in public places or at home. The bystander’s ability to access an AED within minutes is absolutely crucial,” said Ken Leggatt, interim CEO of St. John Ambulance BC & Yukon. “Whether it’s a tourist hot spot, a hotel, a national park, a beach, or a downtown core, an AED should always be within close reach. That’s what Start Me Up BC is all about.”

Start Me Up BC will also come with the development of a companion app, which will allow British Columbians to have lifesaving resources right at their fingertips.

Once officially launched, all proceeds from the campaign will directly benefit St. John Ambulance’s community service programs and support the charity’s first aid training courses. Stay tuned to learn more about attendees and their stories, campaign details, and how you can get involved as a BC resident!

**For any questions or inquiries, contact Leanne Strachan, Strategic Partnerships & Business Development; Start Me Up campaign lead at [leanne.strachan@sja.ca](mailto:leanne.strachan@sja.ca).**