

Iowa HAS HEART



BUTCH GIBBS

The Importance of Knowing CPR and How to Use an AED

In April 2004, Butch Gibbs started having chest pain after attending the annual community play. Not long after arriving home his wife, Susie called 9-1-1 as the chest pain continued and then he went into sudden cardiac arrest. Susie immediately started CPR while his daughter, Amy, called to tell EMS this was no longer a “chest pain” call, it was now a “CPR-in-progress” call.

The Humeston First Responders, of which Butch and his wife Susie are members, arrived in just three minutes and had the first shock off less than a minute later. The shocks would bring his pulse back for a short time, but then it would stop again. The Lucas County Ambulance arrived about 20 minutes later and the paramedic began the cardiac drugs. After about 45 minutes of CPR, 22 AED shocks, and the cardiac drugs - his heartbeat was back to stay.

After the 20-mile trip by ambulance to the local emergency room and then a helicopter ride, he was at Mercy Hospital Medical Center in Des Moines. After eight days, he walked out of the hospital with a defibrillator implanted in his chest— which repeatedly saved his life in January 2012, March 2018, May 2018, July 2020, November 2020, May 2022, November 2022, and December 2022.

Since then Butch and Susie have taught numerous CPR/AED classes to local groups and have lobbied lawmakers in Washington, D.C. and Des Moines for funds to provide AEDs for rural areas where the arrival of an ambulance can be lengthy. They have helped raise money and obtain grants to purchase AEDs for numerous locations. Butch and Susie have been interviewed and demonstrated CPR on television and radio stations and in newspaper interviews to further stress of the importance of knowing how to do CPR and how to use an AED.

Photo includes Butch and his first two rescuers - Susie (wife) and Amy (daughter).