

# North Mankato teen's death inspires installation of AEDS to save lives

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Feb 14, 2025



Faith Larsen inspired family, friends and others to install two automated external defibrillators in Mankato and North Mankato. They hope no one else will die as she did in 2022 from a cardiac arrest.

[Courtesy Samantha Larsen](#)

**NORTH MANKATO** — Faith Larsen was obviously well loved.

Larsen, 19, died in October 2022 a week after collapsing while playing pickup basketball with friends at Maple River High School in Mapleton. She'd suffered a cardiac arrest.

Her friends performed CPR and called 911, but a life-saving device was "100 feet away," one friend of the Larsen family said of an automated external defibrillator locked in the school's athletic director's office. Larsen died a week after the heart attack in a Rochester hospital.

“It’s the saddest thing in the world,” said Rich Feneis, of St. Cloud. “There’s an AED 100 feet away. If it wasn’t locked up and was accessible to the public, she’d still be here. She was a very vibrant person and athletic. If an AED was there, chances are she’d still be here.”

Larsen, a 2021 Mankato West High School graduate, died while she was a student at South Central Community College. She lived at home in North Mankato with her parents and siblings. She was born with a congenital heart defect but didn’t let it slow her down, participating in a variety of sports throughout the years.

Now, people are coming together to celebrate the installation of two outdoor AEDs in Mankato and North Mankato so that others get the life-saving support they need when they need it.

Ribbon cuttings will occur at 10 a.m. Feb. 27 at Mankato West High School and later at 1 p.m. at Wheeler Park in North Mankato. Outdoor AEDs were installed Friday at both locations.

The units cost \$20,000. They were funded by individuals, businesses and governmental entities, Feneis said.

Miss Minnesota Emily Schumacher, who is involved in the effort to install the AEDs, said, “Hopefully we can save the life of someone who’s suffering from a cardiac arrest.”

Faith’s dad, Terry Larsen, said “her heart just went out of time,” of the Oct. 15, 2022, incident that claimed her life. He compared her to professional basketball player Bronny James and other famous athletes who have had cardiac arrests. “An AED was able to shock their heart back to beating again and that’s what Faith needed. Faith needed a shock.”

The Feb. 27 ribbon-cutting for the two outdoor AEDS in Mankato and North Mankato is well timed, as February is Heart Health Awareness Month.

“It would have given her a chance,” Larsen said of an accessible AED. “Only God knows, but it could have given her a chance.”

Riley Hardel, a Larsen family friend who lives in Eagle Lake, said she’s been fortunate to grow with the family and do something in memory of Faith. “It’s been amazing,” she said.

“I think this is going to be just the beginning,” she said. “Our goal is to bring awareness and spread this message of what we’re doing in her honor. Mankato and North Mankato are big enough to be able to put up more AEDs and we’re willing to put in the time and energy it takes to raise money and get businesses on board. Cardiac disease has hit everybody in some way or form. Having access to these devices is something that is necessary.”

[https://www.mankatofreepress.com/news/local\\_news/north-mankato-teens-death-inspires-installation-of-aeds-to-save-lives/article\\_00cf1aea-eafe-11ef-a620-73595d85fefc.html](https://www.mankatofreepress.com/news/local_news/north-mankato-teens-death-inspires-installation-of-aeds-to-save-lives/article_00cf1aea-eafe-11ef-a620-73595d85fefc.html)