

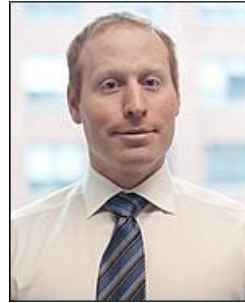
# ACTIVE LIFE

## Mikey Network one example of how homebuilders give back

*by Andrew Pariser*  
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Every February is heart month and with it comes the annual heart health campaigns from various groups, including the Mikey Network. While their slogan is “The Beat Goes On,” their message is of awareness and preparation.

In construction, two important health and safety principles are awareness and prevention.

By studying near misses we can gain valuable information, which can be used to prevent future accidents or respond in the most effective way possible when an emergency situation occurs.

That’s why it is important to talk about a program like The Mikey Network, which provides portable defibrillators for all kinds of public spaces, including construction sites. It’s a registered charity that has distributed about 2,200 easy-to-use units across Canada, with 1,600 of those in GTHA schools, hockey rinks, golf courses, apartment buildings and shopping centres. We we even have one at RESCON headquarters.

Many in our industry have heard of Mikey and how it began after beloved Heathwood Homes marketing VP Mike Salem, 56, died in 2002 at the Bigwin Island golf course on Lake of Bays after suffering a cardiac arrest. That led Heathwood Homes’ founder Hugh Heron to spring into action.

However, few realize that 35 lives have been saved by Mikeys, including Archer Hackett of Renfrew, Ont.

In January 2015, Archer was three months old and suffering from an abnormal heart rhythm. His parents were driving him to the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa when they had to pull over on the side of the road after he suffered a cardiac arrest. They put the pads on his tiny chest and re-started his heart.



Morty

Henkle of the Mikey Network donates four Mikeys to the Halton Region Police Service.

“That is the youngest person that we have had the good fortune to have saved,” says Morty Henkle, executive director of the Mikey Network.

Archer was one of eight lives saved in 2015, the highest number in one year throughout the 12 years of the program.

Reading a letter from Archer’s parents, Henkle said the couple “cannot express how grateful we are. Archer wouldn’t have survived without your help. We’re so thankful to have him home.”

Henkle says saving Archer’s life was a big moment for the Mikey Network.

“I was truly amazed that we were so lucky to have placed a Mikey with a family that was able to save this child’s life,” Henkle says. “Every save is a big save. We’ve had teenagers, we’ve had young children, a person in their 70s, but when you can actually save a child that’s just coming into the world, it’s a pretty awesome feeling.”

Heathwood Homes president Hugh Heron admitted he got emotional when he heard Archer’s story.

“A three-month-old baby. Just imagine. There were tears in my eyes – just for a child to be given a second chance, it’s fantastic,” he said.

About 230 children in Ontario carry a Mikey – donated to families by the Network –Heron said. The Mikey Network also has a close relationship with both the Peel District School Board and the Toronto District School Board.

Heron said the Network is trying to put Mikeys in as many public spaces as possible, and he believes defibrillators should be on every residential construction site in the GTHA. “Builders owe it to their staff to have defibrillators. Everywhere there is fire extinguisher there should be a defibrillator. We want to make this a cardiac-safe city.”

Heathwood’s Bob Finnigan – president of the Canadian Home Builders’ Association – agrees.

“When you’ve got a site with 100-plus people and it’s hot and they’re working hard, it’s important to keep them safe. Highrise builders should look at having those kinds of stations on every second or third floor.

“You look at those 35 direct saves, and who knows how many of those people would have had direct access to a defibrillator.

“It’s a tangible asset that gives you a chance to survive if you’re in cardiac arrest. There’s 2,200 places in Canada that are a whole lot safer than they would be without one.”

We are proud to say our office is one of them, and that the builder making the GTHA a safer region is a member of RESCON.

## **FIVE IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT MIKEY**

- Cardiac arrest has no respect for age – whether someone is three months old or 80, anyone can suffer one.
- If someone suffers a cardiac arrest, they will be unconscious. Here’s what to do: Call 911, then open the defibrillator unit. The machine gives simple, verbal instructions, monitors the person’s heart and assesses whether to shock it.
- The Mikey portable defibrillator can jolt the heart back into a rhythm with up to 360 joules.
- The unit can be used two to three times, but the battery and pads must be replaced after each use.
- If the Mikey sits unused, the pads must be replaced every two years, and the battery must be replaced every five. The unit will last 10.

Learn more about this terrific program at [mikeynetwork.com](http://mikeynetwork.com).