# DGS students receive cardiac screenings

SUBURBAN LIFE MEDIA

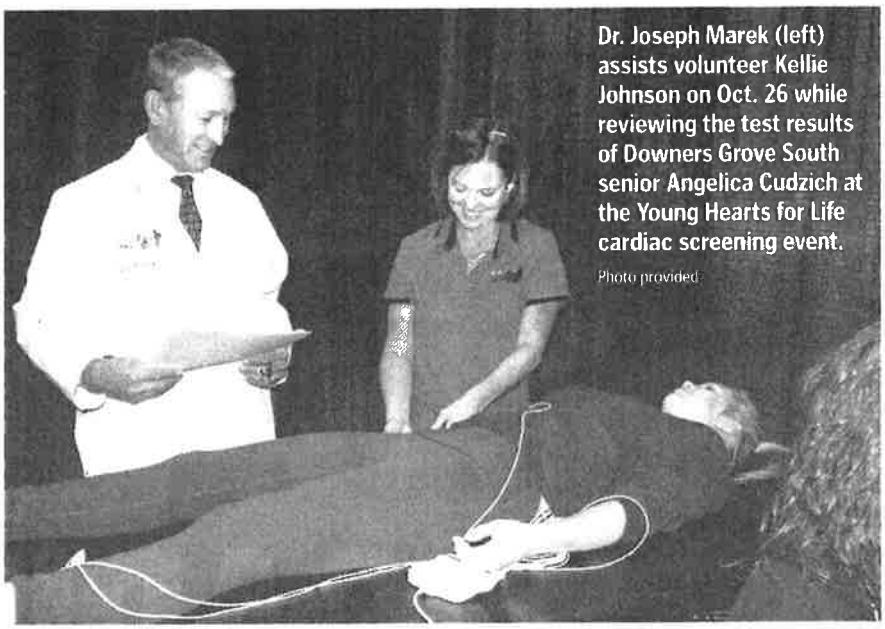
DOWNERS GROVE – More than 1,800 students at Downers Grove South High School were screened for life-threatening cardiac issues thanks to local nonprofit Young Hearts For Life.

The organization offered free electrocardiograph procedures to the school's entire student body Oct. 26, sponsored by Good Samaritan Hospital and other community partners, according to a hospital news release.

The nonprofit heart screening program was founded in 2006 by Dr. Joseph Marek, a clinical cardiologist at Good Samaritan Hospital and senior medical director of cardiopulmonary service with Advocate Medical Group.

The organization's goal is to offer the simple, noninvasive tests performed by community volunteers to catch electrical abnormalities in the hearts of young men and women that can cause sudden death, the release stated.

To date, it has screened more than 180,000 students and identified more than 2,400 students with previously undetected heart conditions, including seven at Downers Grove South, according to the release.



Dr. Joseph Marek (left) assists volunteer Kellie Johnson on Oct. 26 while reviewing the test results of Downers Grove South senior Angelica Cudzich at the Young Hearts for Life cardiac screening event.

Photo provided

"Today's screening was successful because the community, school and local businesses came together to try to do something for these children," Marek said in the release. "Although it is a tough phone call for these parents to receive, their child now has the opportunity to get treatment for a life-threatening condition they previously were not aware of."

Young Hearts For Life is the largest screening program in the United States and is known for its model that uses trained community volunteers to deliver a low-cost, efficient screening program. Marek has taught physicians across the country how to run screenings for students and athletes, the release stated.