



## **Saint Viator Takes Proactive Approach to Detecting Heart Defects**

September 7, 2011



Junior Kevin Schreiber, a member of the track and cross country teams, brought the idea of EKG testing to Saint Viator.

On Sept. 21, Saint Viator will be one of the first Northwest suburban high schools to make electrocardiograms (EKGs) available to all students as part of their proactive stance on detecting undiagnosed heart ailments.

Working with the Lake County-based Max Schewitz Foundation and its Screen for Teens program, healthcare professionals will be at Saint Viator on Sept. 21 to conduct the painless, two-minute test.

The cost is only \$10 per student, thanks to a generous donation from the Saint Viator Athletic Booster Club, and more than 400 students already have registered.

Junior Kevin Schreiber of Rolling Meadows brought the availability of the test to school officials.

“If the past is any indication, somewhere between 11 and 13 Viator students could discover they have an undetected heart problem,” Schreiber says. “A test like this seems like a small price to pay.”

Schreiber runs cross country and track; however, Saint Viator officials believe the test would benefit all students, not just athletes.

“Participation is optional,” says Principal Eileen Manno, “but we believe all teenagers can benefit from being tested.”

An EKG offers a “snapshot” of a student’s heart. It is designed to detect irregular heart rhythms and other markers for sudden cardiac death, or SCD.

“This is something we feel very strongly about as the instances of students dying due to undetected heart ailments seems to have risen,” says Athletic Director Tim Carlson.

Currently, an EKG is not typically conducted in routine physicals or in sports physicals, yet more than 7,000 children die of sudden cardiac arrest each year, according to the Oakbrook Terrace-based Midwest Heart Foundation.

In offering the test, Saint Viator would be the first private school and one of the first high schools throughout the Northwest suburbs to conduct the potentially lifesaving screening.

“If we can at least give families some piece of mind, or direct them to the necessary help if a problem is detected,” Carlson adds, “then certainly the program is well worth it.”