

***Saving Lives in the San Fernando Valley***  
**BASE**

BASE (Basic Adult Spanish Education, Inc.), a community-based organization in the City of Canoga Park northeast of Los Angeles, provides EL Civics classes and babysitting services to the San Fernando Valley's Elementary and High School Parent and Family Centers and has done so for the past five years. The EL Civics classes offer CPR and first aid training — training



specifically requested by students as one of their selected objectives for the course. To volunteer at their children's schools and assist with playground activities, the EL Civics students needed to improve their English language skills, learn CPR, and get first aid training.

The training has given the students not only the confidence to perform in the capacity of volunteers, but also the expertise to handle emergencies outside school.

- Three students who completed the program reported that, while waiting for paramedics to arrive, they used the training to take care of a family member who had a heart attack.
- One student reported using the Heimlich maneuver to dislodge a small toy her child had swallowed. She stated, "I think my child could have died had I not been trained in this procedure."
- Another student, who worked as a family housekeeper, used the Heimlich maneuver to help her boss who had choked on food while trying to swallow. She stated, "I asked him if he was okay, and he kept pointing to his throat. I told him I had been trained in first aid and asked if I could help him. He nodded yes, and I applied the Heimlich maneuver and was able to dislodge the food particle. My boss loves me now."
- One group of students prepared posters illustrating an emergency health or safety problem then used the posters to make oral presentations to their classmates and to parents at their children's schools.
- A student who completed the program became the coordinator of the parent center at her child's school and convinced the principal to let BASE teach an EL Civics course there. BASE trained and certified nineteen students in CPR and first aid.



This entire process has enriched the lives of all who have been involved. In addition to learning how to perform CPR and emergency first aid, all the students gained confidence in organizing tasks and activities. They became more confident using their English language and literacy skills in their communities — not only for their own gain, but also for the enrichment of their classmates, their families, their friends, and their communities.