The Pulse

American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

back-to-School

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And the Beat Goes On...

It's difficult to write on the enormity and significance of the Jump Rope For Heart program's 25th anniversary. A simple idea founded by people who wanted to make a difference in kids lives, their activity levels, and the fight against heart disease and stroke has resulted in millions of dollars raised and many lives saved. And this is just the beginning of Jump's accomplishments. 25 years of amazing history and events; the beat goes on...

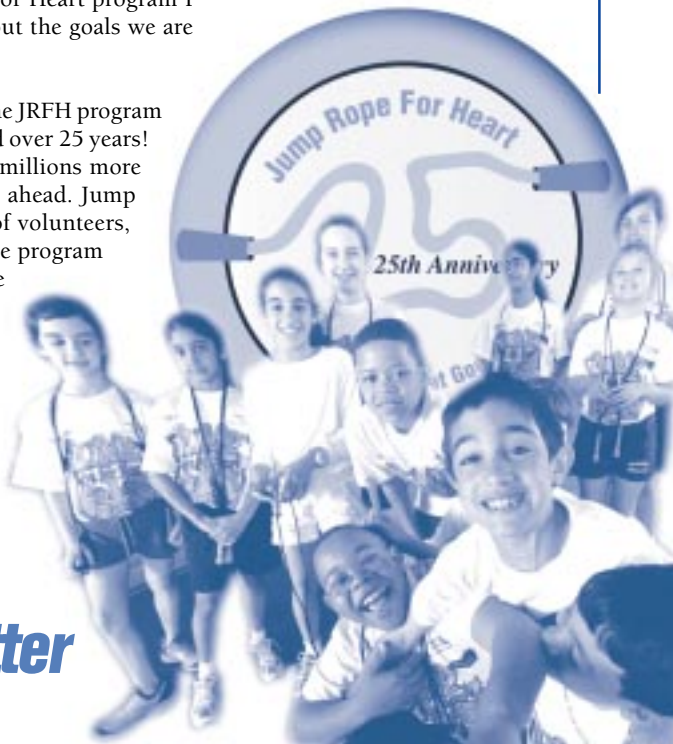
The African proverb "it takes a village to raise a child" comes to mind with the JRFH program. The contributions of so many from across the country have helped JRFH to develop into an outstanding program — the leading schoolsite educational fund development program in the nation. JRFH is in a league of its own!

On a personal note, I can recall the first time I took part in a JRFH event and now many years later I still remember it. As a student at Sanford Elementary School in Newport News, Virginia I took part in Jump Rope for Heart back when donations were based on each jump completed and Pepi was the mascot.

Did JRFH kick off my life long love of physical activity? I don't know for certain, but I do know that I had a great time jumping with my friends and that I looked forward to the event the next year. I also know that I felt good about raising money to fight heart disease and stroke — a disease that my maternal grandfather died prematurely from before I ever got to meet him. And now in my very different role with the Jump Rope for Heart program I still look forward to the next year and still feel good about the goals we are working towards. Oh, and I still jump rope, too!

This year we had more than 5 million kids participate in the JRFH program — ***5 million***! Imagine all of the kids that have participated over 25 years! I'm just one 'kid' that benefited from JRFH — there are millions more just like me and millions more yet to come in the years ahead. Jump Rope for Heart has made its mark thanks to the village of volunteers, staff, and kids that have participated in and supported the program all of these years. Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do! As this newsletter showcases, your efforts truly have made a huge difference in the fight against heart disease and stroke and in creating healthy active learners for a quarter century. **Happy 25th Anniversary Jump Rope for Heart!** ♥

— S. Schoenberg



At the Heart of the Matter

JUMP ROPE FOR HEART PROGRAM MAY IMPROVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Jumping Rope May Be a Perfect Exercise for the Brain

By: Jean Blaydes, Educational Consultant,
former Physical Educator and pioneer Jump Rope for Heart Coordinator

"Physical activity is good not only for the heart, but also for the brain, feeding it glucose and oxygen, all of which makes it easier for children of all ages to learn. Numerous studies show that children who exercise do better in school."[1]

Education is in the age of standards-based assessment. Students experience learning and make connections based on curriculum that is designed with specific academic objectives in mind. Some of the most beneficial lifelong learning comes from real life experiences that cannot be measured by paper and pencil tests alone. Problem solving, communication, goal setting, creativity, perseverance, risk taking and altruism are skills that help create productive, well-rounded citizens. The American Heart Association's *Jump Rope For Heart* program can help students achieve many of the academic standards by encouraging them to engage in experiential learning strategies that anchor learning 90% better. Students also learn about important health and fitness practices that can lead to healthy, active, lifelong behavior changes.

JUMPING ROPE MAY BE AN IDEAL BRAIN EXERCISE

Jumping rope is an excellent exercise for cardiovascular fitness, muscular endurance and coordination. Now researchers are learning that exercise like jumping rope also prepares the brain for optimal learning. Current brain research supports the need for movement in the learning process. Here are just a few of the ways that jumping rope may help prepare the brain for learning.

- Raising heart rate gets more blood to the brain, feeding it needed nutrients and oxygen for heightened alertness and mental focus.
- Aerobic exercise grows new brain cells in rodents, and promising research suggests that may also apply to humans.[2] In short, jumping rope is an exercise that allows both brain hemispheres to perform parallel.
- The vestibular system that creates spatial awareness and mental alertness is strengthened through activities such as jumping rope.[3] Balance and jumping activities provide the student with a framework for reading and other academic skills.
- Rhythmic aspects of jumping rope can develop the internal dialogue needed to establish basic reading skills.[4] Beat awareness and beat competency simulate the basic rhythm patterns of our language that need to be established for better language acquisition.[5]
- Physical activity reduces stress. Cardiovascular exercise places the brain into homeostasis and contributes to balancing the body's chemistry, electrical, and organ systems. Exercise can have similar benefits as some anti-depressant medications.[6] Jumping rope can be a lifelong activity requiring little equipment, time and space.

All things being equal, a healthy active student learns better.[7]

[1]Begley, S. " Your Child's Brain", Newsweek, Feb. 19, 1996
[2]Gage, R. and Van Pragg, H. "New Brain Cells," Scientific American, May 1999
[3]Hannaford, C. "Smart Moves," Great Ocean Publishers, 1995
[4]Brewer, C., and Campbell, D., "Rhythms of Learning." Zephyr Press, December 1991
[5]Weikart, P., 'Beat Competency and Beat Awareness', AAHPERD Convention Presenter, Orlando, 2000
[6]Ratey, J. "A User's Guide to the Brain", Pantheon Books, 2001
[7]Hesslow, G., cerebellum researcher from Sweden.

CREATIVE ENHANCEMENTS TO *JUMP ROPE FOR HEART* MAY HELP ACHIEVE OTHER ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Not only does a physically fit, healthy body learn better, movement provides cognitive reinforcement when using multi-sensory teaching techniques. Academic standards in reading, math, science and social studies can be specifically taught in a Jump Rope For Heart program delivered through the physical education curriculum. By having a Jump Rope for Heart event, the physical educator can integrate other academic objectives into the physical education standards that are met by doing the jump rope unit. All curriculum areas can be represented to satisfy the talents, learning styles, and multiple intelligence of all students. Here are just a few possibilities.

MATH

- **Estimation:** Estimate how many jump ropes long is the gym? How many jump ropes wide is the gym? Do you think the number will be greater than or less than the cafeteria? Students in teams cooperatively measure the gym in jump rope lengths.
- **Geometry:** We now know the length and width of the gym. What is the area of the gym? What is the perimeter of the gym?
- **Data Collection:** Gather heart rate data to develop story problems, create graphs, and compare and contrast activities.

LANGUAGE ARTS/READING

- Write a persuasive letter to send to prospective donors explaining why donating money to the American Heart Association helps fight heart disease and stroke.
- Create a video showing the benefits of jumping rope and *Jump Rope For Heart*. Students work in groups to write the script. They develop the main idea, create the setting, select the characters and organize the facts and concepts.
- Write a newspaper article following the event to be sent to the local newspaper.
- Role-play a scenario to practice communication skills when asking for donations.

SCIENCE

- Transform the gym into a model of the heart. Work together in groups to create stations of an obstacle course that represent the cardiovascular system. Explain what happens in the heart and body as you travel through the obstacle course system.

TECHNOLOGY

- Record the instructions for each station of the heart obstacle course using a digital camera and computer. Create a station card with words and pictures for each station.

SOCIAL STUDIES

- Using a map of the school neighborhood, city, state and USA, designate where the donations for *Jump Rope For Heart* came from. Make a graph using the data.

ART

- Create a poster to announce the *Jump Rope For Heart* event.
- Create bumper stickers, art for T-shirts, or billboards about the importance of cardiovascular fitness.

MUSIC

- Recite some common jump rope rhymes like "Cinderella Dressed in Yellow". Write a new, more modern jump rope rhyme or create a rap rendition.

Coordinator's Corner

Meet Rene Bibaud, Northwest District Jump Rope for Heart Coordinator

Allow me to introduce myself.

I'm the new Northwest District Jump Rope for Heart Coordinator. I thought it would be fitting to introduce myself and share with you my goals for the upcoming year.

My name is Rene Bibaud, and I'm a professional rope jumper, jump roper, rope skipper...well, you get the idea.

I've been jumping rope for over 23 years: performing, competing, coaching, and teaching. I started jumping in Physical Education class as part of the Jump Rope for Heart Program.

I was one of the first members of the Hot Dog jump rope team — one of the first AHA demonstration teams in the United States.

I traveled, performed and competed under the coaching of Bob Melson as a student at Helen Keller Elementary School, until my Senior year at Juanita High School.

I've had some wonderful experiences as a Jump Rope for Heart kid. I had the awesome experience of traveling to many foreign countries, competing at national and international levels, and working with students and teachers to help them understand the fun and fitness benefits of jumping rope.

Over the last few years, my jumping rope took on the form of a career — can you believe it? I spent four years touring, performing, and coaching with the Cirque Du Soleil. I was "discovered" while I was providing color commentary for ESPN and their coverage of a National jump rope competition. The casting director at Cirque noticed my performance, looked me up on the internet and invited me to tour the world with a show called "Quidam" I accepted the offer and ran away with the circus!

I decided to finish touring and set up camp back home in Seattle, where I live now and enjoy performing school assembly programs and corporate entertainment venues. I continue to tour, but now it's as a soloist.

As a JRFH coordinator, I hope to take my traveling experiences and put them to good use. I have the opportunity to meet Physical Educators across the country and learn from their innovations and enthusiasm for JRFH. I've already heard a great deal of suggestions for fun ideas and inspiring tips to make a JRFH event meaningful and exciting for all. I hope to compile the information and have it available to anyone in need.

I also have the unique opportunity to spread the word of Jump Rope through public appearances and occasional television interviews and newspaper articles. (I just finished an interview in Mens Fitness — March Issue and Fitness Magazine — this summer).

Finally, my enthusiasm for jump rope demo teams would be helpful in promoting and supporting the use of our talented jumpers and putting their skills to good use.

Please feel free to contact me via email at rene@jumpropenet.com or on the web at www.jumpropenet.com ♥

Rene Bibaud Jumps onto ESPN

Rene Bibaud, Northwest District JRFH Coordinator, can be seen on ESPN wearing her JRFH 25th anniversary T-Shirt while performing jump rope skills.

Rene was the color commentator for ESPN at this year's National Jump Rope Competition in Orlando, Florida, and performed her solo routine for the cameras. She also provided the play by play for the entire competition. Her duties included describing the technical elements of competition, introducing teams, interviewing competitors and sharing information about the sport of jumping rope. Rene also describes how she became a rope skipper as part of the Jump Rope for Heart program at her school over 20 years ago.

The program is televised over 30 times per season. The upcoming air dates include:

- **ESPN1 9/4 10:00 pm CST**
- **ESPN1 9/23 12:30 pm CST**
- **ESPN1 10/23 12:30 pm CST**
- **ESPN2 10/26 1:00 pm CST**

If you would like additional details, you can contact rene@jumpropenet.com.

What great exposure for Jump Rope for Heart!!!!!

Survivor Stories

A Heart of Gold

By: Andrea J. Cook, Rapid City Journal
Submitted By: Robin Albers, Area AHA Director - Underwood, SD

When she needed it, the American Heart Association was there for her. Now, a Rapid City girl has returned the favor.

As her ponytail bounces to the rhythm of her bouncing feet, Angela Page, 9, looks much like other children twirling jump ropes in Monday's gym class at Valley View Elementary School. Angela would prefer that everyone think of her as just a typical kid, but then she went out and raised $1,024 for the American Heart Association's Jump Rope for Heart at her school.

"This is the first time I've ever seen anyone raise $1,000," her physical education teacher, Lee Shepherd, said. "I've talked to other people who have done this for a lot of years, and the most they've ever seen is $400 to $500."

Shepherd proudly points to Angela's pledge form. Scrawled across the top in big letters are the words — "I want to raise $1,000."

by telling how the American Heart Association helped her when she was sick. "She was really sincere," Valerie said. "She told her story — 'I probably wouldn't be here if other people wouldn't have donated."

The family went door to door in their neighborhood and contacted a few businesses. Everyone was very nice, except for one 'kinda grumpy man', Angela said.

Angela was born prematurely. When she was 4, she collapsed one night at the supper table. Doctors diagnosed a micro-valve weakness. LifeFlight flew Angela to Denver for treatment.

"I'm a single parent of two," Valerie said. "I didn't have the money to go to Denver. Out of the blue, the lady called me and said, "We've got the money for your gas and your hotel room, don't worry about it."

In Denver, doctors treated Angela with medication that helped strengthen her heart valve. She still has a heart murmur, but she now leads a fairly normal life.

Angela raised the money in about five days, accompanied by her mom, Valerie Page, and her 7-year-old sister, Makayla. Angela said her sister was a big help.

"She took this on herself," Valerie said. "There was one night we were out until almost 11:00 p.m. She did not want to go home. She was devastated because we were only at $924, and the pledges had to be turned in the next day." Pledges ranged from $2 to one generous $500 check.

Angela is not interested in all the attention her fund-raising created, her mom said. "She just wanted to say thank you." Angela met her goal, and just a little more,

"She's doing awesome now," Valerie said, watching Angela as she laughs and giggles with her friends.

Her mom said that without the support that the American Heart Association provides for cardiovascular research and equipment, Angela might not be alive.

"When it came down to this critical time for her, if the doctors wouldn't have known (how to treat her) she probably wouldn't be alive today," Valerie said. "She has a heart of gold," Valerie added as Angela jumped rope in Valley View's gym. "This was all her idea. Next year, her goal is $2,000."

2002-2003 NATIONAL JRFH AND HFH AWARD WINNERS

★ **ROOKIE OF THE YEAR - JRFH**

St. Thomas Episcopal School
Coral Gables, FL
$27,590.14

★ **ROOKIE OF THE YEAR - HFH**

Tenafly Middle School
Berger, NJ
$12,663

★ **HIGHEST PER CAPITA AWARDS: BASED ON ENROLLMENT AND GROSS DOLLARS RAISED**

Jump enrollment of 250-500
Woodland Intermediate - Gurnee, IL
$40,540.92
Enrollment 400

Jump enrollment of less than 250
Community School of Naples - Naples, FL
$30,003.43
Enrollment 170

Hoops enrollment of 351-700
Glenmont Elementary School - Glenmont, NY
$25,039
Enrollment 556

Hoops enrollment of less than 350
Pingry Short Hill Campus - Short Hills, NJ
$21,030
Enrollment 294

★ **OPEN DOOR AWARD:** Recognizes a JRFH or HFH volunteer that has helped bring other peers into the program by 'opening doors'.

Regina Stafford, TX
6 years as a JRFH volunteer, constantly connects staff with coordinators at other schools by being a liaison that encourages schools to participate. Also attends events, is involved with demo teams, and just pitches in where needed.

★ **HEART HEALTHY SCHOOL AWARD:** Recognizes a JRFH or HFH school that has been instrumental in implementing AHA school related programs in the school.

Deerfield Elementary School, MA
Conducts CPR in Schools program, has participated in JRFH for 6 years, implemented a heart-healthy salad bar program with fruits and vegetables, heavily focuses on the life saving research the AHA conducts and engages the entire school with AHA educational messages and materials.

★ **ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR:** Recognizes an outstanding Superintendent and or Instructor of PE that has been instrumental with growing the JRFH and HFH programs

Dr. Mary Marks, VA
Has been involved with JRFH for 5 years. Encourages all teachers and the PTA/PTO to support JRFH/HFH, is an active participant with CPR in Schools, has been instrumental with the success of Fairfax County, VA by opening many new doors.

★ **PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR:** Recognizes an outstanding school principal that has helped grow the JRFH or HFH programs.

Jennifer Rainey, TX
Gets personally involved with Jump and encourages 100% participation at her school. Jennifer has held workshops for other principals and coordinators in the area to inform them about the JRFH program. Strongly supports the local JRFH demo team.

★ **FAYE BILES EDUCATIONAL AWARD:** Recognizes a coordinator that has been instrumental with implementing AHA school related programs within their school and community.

Kristine Brockhagen, TX
Schoolsite Chair for Dallas Board of Directors; top JRFH event in TX; leads workshops on teaching CPR, PE techniques, jump rope skills; participates on the national educational kit development taskforce; coaches a JRFH demonstration team; Dallas's AHA 'Hometown Hero'; sits on the public advocacy committee.

★ **JRFH COORDINATORS OF THE YEAR**

Ella Schultheis, Rick LaPalia and Mark Salerno
French Road Elementary School, NY

★ **HFH COORDINATOR OF THE YEAR**

David O'Hara
Forestville Elementary, VA

Riverglades Elementary School

By: Kimberly Patterson,
Youth Market Director
American Heart Association
Florida/Puerto Rico Affiliate

When Coach Richard Rusche decided to participate in Jump Rope for Heart, he wanted to coordinate an event that benefited the entire school. Coach Rusche got the students, teachers, and administrators enthusiastic for their first ever Jump Rope for Heart event at Riverglades Elementary School in Parkland, Florida. The event took place on Valentine's Day to tie into "Heart Month".

With tremendous support from the PTA and the teachers and staff at the school, Riverglades Elementary School raised $23,644.80 to help fight heart disease and stroke! Coach Rusche teaches his students about the importance of exercise, healthy eating habits, helping others, and obtaining a sense of altruism. Congratulations Coach and the students of Riverglades Elementary School on your successful JRFH event! ♥

CONGRATULATIONS CENTRAL PARK ELEMENTARY

By: Tonya Bradford, Youth Market Director
Florida/Puerto Rico Affiliate

Coach Mark Tortora and his students at Central Park Elementary in Plantation, Florida have been helping save lives through the Jump Rope for Heart program for more than 10 years. This year students raised $17,778.00 — a 40% increase over last year! JRFH banners displayed throughout the school, morning announcements about Jump Rope for Heart, and working with their partners in excellence to reward students for their participation are just a few things Coach Tortora did to get his students excited about the event. Coach Tortora credits his students with the success; their commitment to leading a heart healthy life and helping those in their community is a great example of how kids can make a difference. ♥

Coach Eric Simmond's students at the Sagemont School in Weston, FL, who participate in JRFH.

TOP 25 SCHOOLS

JUMP ROPE FOR HEART

1	$78,341	French Rd. Elementary School	NY
2	$60,011	Kamehameha Elementary School	HI
3	$54,750	Kennesaw Elementary School	GA
4	$42,848	Greater Atlanta Christian School	GA
5	$40,541	Woodland Intermediate School	IL
6	$34,925	Laguna Elementary School	AZ
7	$34,137	Northley Middle School	PA
8	$33,607	Commonwealth Elementary	TX
9	$33,000	Mason Heights Elementary School	OH
10	$32,775	Pleasant Ridge Elementary School	IL
11	$32,016	Prospect Mill Elementary School	MD
12	$31,486	Rockport Elementary School	ME
13	$30,727	Spring Brook Elementary School	IL
14	$30,622	Old Greenwich Elementary School	CT
15	$30,003	Community School of Naples	FL
16	$29,091	Vickery Creek Elementary	GA
17	$27,938	Mt. Bethel Elementary	GA
18	$27,590	St. Thomas Episcopal School	FL
19	$27,407	Lihikai Elementary School	HI
20	$27,075	Alabama Christian Academy	AL
21	$26,797	Barnwell Elementary School	GA
22	$26,542	Alamance Elementary School	NC
23	$25,605	Old Settlers Elementary	TX
24	$25,500	Dogwood Elementary School	TN
25	$25,489	Loretto Elementary School	FL

HOOPS FOR HEART

1	$58,538	North Attleboro Middle School	MA
2	$27,258	Forestville Elementary School	VA
3	$24,865	Glenmont Elementary School	NY
4	$23,905	Sykesville Middle School	MD
5	$21,266	Barrington Middle School-Prairie	IL
6	$21,133	Spring Branch Jr. High	TX
7	$20,730	Pingry Short Hills Campus School	NJ
8	$20,134	Silver Spring International Middle School	MD
9	$19,446	Bel Air Middle School	MD
10	$19,109	East Woods School	OH
11	$16,554	Eagle Hill-Greenwich School	CT
12	$15,241	Avondale Meadows Elementary School	MI
13	$15,052	Linn-Mar Middle School	IA
14	$14,806	Maize East Elementary	KS
15	$14,733	Dartmouth Middle School	MA
16	$14,210	Arden Road Elementary	TX
17	$13,816	Jefferson Junior High School	IL
18	$13,425	Manor Woods Elementary School	MD
19	$13,387	Central Elementary School	OH
20	$13,117	South Charlotte Middle School	NC
21	$12,663	Tenafly Middle School	NJ
22	$12,543	Troy Intermediate School	OH
23	$12,000	Lincoln Elementary School	NJ
24	$11,975	Barnum Woods Elementary School	NY
25	$11,882	Barrington Middle School Station	IL