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Catch the Jump Rope for Heart Spirit!

Sharing the Wealth: Insight from Successful Jump Rope for Heart Fund Raisers

By Kathy Gay, State Coordinator, Jump Rope for Heart Albemarle County Public Schools, Virginia

Introduction

There are many JRFH “success stories,” with amazing individuals who coordinate amazing events. The success of the JRFH program depends primarily on the people conducting the events. At the recent VAHPERD Convention, the American Heart Association sponsored a panel discussion including the top fund raising schools and their coordinators. At this discussion, ideas and strategies were shared in an effort to help others with their events. There are several key concepts that successful coordinators use. It is hoped they will be put to good use by other professionals considering or currently conducting JRFH events.

Concept 1: Use the entire student population (or as much as possible)

Schools raising large amounts of money have one thing in common: lots of participants. How do they do this? By involving the entire student population. Sample strategies include: faculty participating, different grade levels competing, offering students and faculty incentives (e.g. using P.E. class time), involving parents, and holding the event in conjunction with other events (e.g. a student-faculty basketball game). Successful coordinators find a way to make it special.

Concept 2: Properly motivate the participants

Health and physical educators know the key to participation in a healthy life-style is proper motivation. Successful JRFH coordinators use a variety of motivational techniques. Although many of these are largely extrinsic motivators, they are important in the formula for success. And as we know, many highly motivated individuals have to be externally motivated from time to time!

Awards and prizes are provided to most participants. For example, Mary Austin of Gloria Dei Lutheran

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Jump Rope for Heart Goes to the State Fair

Last August the Wisconsin Jump Rope for Heart Task Force saw a year of planning and preparation pay off when they celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Jump Rope for Heart program at the Wisconsin State Fair. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of Peggy Eilers, a task force member, a day long array of activities took place at the annual state fair.

A large tent was provided on the main mall grass area where registration for "The Big Jump" took place. Tables for exhibits, screenings and activities for heart health were included and ropes were given away to those fair attendees wearing JRFH shirts. Other scheduled events included a jump rope clinic by the WI Wizard teams, two shows by the Wizards and "The Big Jump." State task force members along with AHA staff and volunteers handled the many duties that make a day like this successful. Members of the group mingled with fairgoers selling ropes, giving away key rings, bags and encouraging everyone to participate in "The Big Jump." Large crowds enjoyed the demonstrations by the Wizards and hundreds took part in "The Big Jump."

"I was really impressed by the number of heart disease survivors who purchased ropes as I walked around, just to say thank you for the research breakthroughs funded by programs such as Jump," said Susan Cahoon, Vice President of Marketing of the American Heart Northland Affiliate. Congratulations to Wisconsin for promoting Jump Rope for Heart in such an innovative way! ♥

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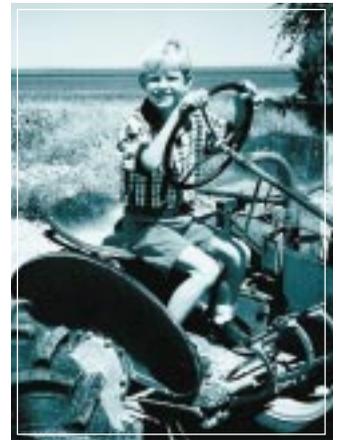
The AHA Research Corner

by Daniel Ruacho, AHA Staff

A student gets 30 of her closest friends and family to donate to the American Heart Association. That's pretty impressive. She jumps rope for two hours straight. That's impressive, too. And the prizes she wins for jumping and raising money? Very impressive. But how about a 17-day-old boy getting a heart transplant? How about growing new heart valves in a lab? And how about a drug that helps hundreds of thousands of stroke survivors lead active, healthy lives? That's amazing. That's just some of the research made possible because of the money raised by Jump Rope for Heart and Hoops for Heart.

As well as teaching kids the value of exercise and physical health, the Jump Rope for Heart and Hoops for Heart programs help the American Heart Association raise valuable funds for important research, research that has helped save millions of lives and could help save millions more. In the past few years, researchers have isolated genes that contribute to high blood pressure - a condition that affects 50 million Americans and increases their risk of heart attack and stroke. Researchers have also isolated genes that contribute to congenital heart defects in children - the leading cause of death for infants in the Western World. By understanding how certain genes affect certain diseases, researchers can develop new treatments that strike right at the heart of the problem.

One area of research is especially important to seven-year-old Reid Layton, Jump Rope for Heart's top fundraiser in the West Texas community of Dell City. Reid was born with a congenital heart defect that had weakened his mitral valve, causing blood to leak back into his heart. Despite his condition, and despite having two open heart surgeries before he was even a year old, Reid and his sister have raised over \$1,800 for Jump Rope for Heart. Over the past five years, Reid's small town has raised over \$16,000 to help fund medical research, including research that allows scientists to grow new heart valves in a lab. Thanks to the efforts of Reid and thousands of kids like him, a cure for his condition may be within sight.



Reid Layton

Reid Layton is a one-of-a-kind kid, but conditions like his affect millions of Americans every year. Chances are you know one of them. They may be a co-worker, a friend or a family member. They could be 80 or they could be eight. In any case, research is the first step toward a cure. The American Heart Association's goal is to reduce coronary heart disease, stroke and risk by 25 percent by 2008. It's that simple and it's that ambitious. And it all starts with the dedication and commitment of volunteers like you. ♥

Stories from the Heart

by Kristine Brockhagen



I Know What I'll Do

One year, one of my 2nd grade students was having a great deal of difficulty getting her neighbors to contribute to the AHA because a public school in her neighborhood was also participating in the Jump Rope for Heart event at their school. She went back to her home discouraged, but not defeated. On her own accord, she decided to create several posters. Some of her posters included messages such as smoking is bad for your heart, exercise is good for your heart, etc. She then took the posters back to the same homes that she had visited earlier. She told them, "I know you have already given a donation to the AHA, but would you consider buying one of my posters?" You can only imagine their reaction to this persistent girl. She raised over \$200 selling her posters that year. ♥

Survivor Stories



Riley Weinstein, Age 7.

By Jeffery Weinstein

"We should consider every day lost in which we have not danced at least once."-Friedrich Nietzsche

In March of 1995, Teri, my wife, and twin daughters, Riley and Taylor, were living in LA with my wife's parents. I was working 250 miles away in El Centro, CA and driving in on weekends to be with them. My wife was 6 months pregnant with our son Max. One day Riley complained of a headache and showed flu like symptoms. Our family pediatrician examined her and told Teri that Riley had some childhood virus.

Twenty-four hours later, Riley was in the emergency room at Tarzana Medical Center. X-Rays and MRIs revealed a mass at the base of her brain. My wife and I were told that Riley had a severe stroke. Riley's mass was in the brain stem, it had bled and was probably still bleeding. We prepared to say goodbye to our daughter. Then the doctor told us she needed to be transported to UCLA Medial Center where pediatric neurosurgeons could try to help her. It was her only chance.

When Riley arrived at UCLA, we were met by Dr. Jorge Lazareff. He confirmed the seriousness of Riley's condition, but told us not to give up hope.

The fact that Riley was still alive after such massive bleeding meant that she was a fighter.

The first of many surgeries followed, lasting 14 hours. It involved removing a piece of Riley's skull, separating the two halves of the brain, manipulating the brain stem and then removing the mass. The veins within the mass can rupture at any time, causing a stroke. It is crucial to remove all of the mass to insure that no additional strokes happen in the future. Riley had 5 such surgeries. Unfortunately, Riley also suffered 2 additional strokes during this time. The staff at UCLA said it was a miracle that she was still with us.

During the first surgery the doctors manipulated the brain stem, disconnecting it from the rest of the brain. This causes the brain to lose all its ability to talk to the body. Riley lost all motor skills; for a while she needed a respirator just to breathe. Most of the doctors told us that we should not expect much from Riley and to be thankful she was even alive. However, Dr. Lazareff said that Riley might prove the medical establishment wrong again.

When we finally got Riley home, she could not eat, walk, talk, or do the basic movements expected of even a newborn. My wife worked daily with Riley and I returned to work. Each week, when I returned to L.A., I witnessed a new miracle. With the love only a mother could give, Riley learned how to eat, talk, and move her limbs again. During this period, after seeing a dance recital on television, Riley announced that she wanted to be a ballerina when she grew up. Riley's spirit was dreaming of dance even before she relearned to walk.

Then we received the news that a recent MRI had shown more of the mass. In August, Riley once again went to UCLA. The single surgery that would remove the remaining mass turned into seven more surgeries and 5 weeks in the hospital. Once again Riley was to beat the odds and survived the surgeries. Once again, her motor skills were sacrificed to reach the mass by manipulating the brain stem during the operation. Once again, she woke up only being able to communicate her pain with her eyes. But once again, Riley did not give up. By now I had relocated my job back to L.A., and I saw first hand her daily struggle to do the simple things we all take for granted.

As I write this Riley is a beautiful 6 year-old girl. For the past three years, she has fought many

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The Incentive Selection Process for Jump Rope for Heart and Hoops for Heart

Robert Blackburn, Ed.D.,
Executive Director, NCAAPERD, AHA/AAHPERD Joint Projects Committee Member

Incentives have played a major role in the success of the Jump/Hoops program since its inception in 1978. Essentially, the incentives provide an opportunity for the American Heart Association and AAHPERD to say “thank you” to the participants and coordinators for all of their hard work. The purpose of the incentive selection process is to insure that the incentives for participants are safe, fun and promote the importance of physical activity. With the American Heart Association reorganization and the move toward nationwide centralization of incentives, it is important for alliance members to understand the current process.

Andy Blanchard of New Hampshire and I represented AAHPERD on the Joint Projects Committee in Dallas for the initial screening of incentives last November. The criteria for selection of incentives used by various groups in the selection process included the following:

- Does the item promote the importance of physical activity?
- Can the item be used as an educational tool?
- Is the item safe?
- Is the item durable?
- Is the item fun?
- Is the perceived value of the item relative to the prize level?
- Is the item appropriate to fundraising cost?

The process which was used this past year to select the incentives includes the following steps:

Step 1 A single vendor was selected to survey the marketplace for items to be included in the focus testing. The vendor analyzed incentives from various trade shows such as ad specialties shows, sportswear and sporting good shows and motivation shows. The vendor also met with wholesale vendors to review product lines for incentive items and various costs of items. Input and suggestions from Jump/Hoops coordinators were also solicited.

Step 2 A group of AHA staff and the representatives of the Joint Projects Committee met in Dallas to review over 250 proposed incentive items. The committee reduced the number of items to a workable number for review. The committee then spent two days going into four Texas schools around the Dallas area to get an initial screening by students. Yes, Texas students do pledge allegiance to the Texas flag as well as the US flag to open the school day. Local teachers worked with the review committee and had their students participate in the screening. The students bounced, tossed, jumped, squeezed, pinched, turned on and off, played with, dropped and handled each item in every way you could think of and some ways we adults could not think of. We found out quickly about the safety and quality of each item as well as how the children perceived the items. When the students finished handling the items, they completed an evaluation form that ranked items from most preferred to least preferred. Results were tabulated by an independent market research firm. The committee then met as a whole at the end of two days of observing, playing with, handling, and evaluating the incentives ourselves- and came to a consensus on the range of incentives we would recommend to be used in further field and focus testing.

Step 3 After this initial screening with Texas students, the focus testing then moved to three additional states. States and schools were selected to participate based on location and previous participation in the Jump and Hoops for Heart program. The other three states used this past year were Vermont, Colorado, and Louisiana. The procedure used in Texas was also utilized in this stage of focus testing.

Step 4 With this screening and input from children in the various states, the market research firm tabulated the results and made recommendations for each category focus tested. Input from the children, the perceived value relative to the prize level, safety

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Hoops for Heart Event — Planning for Success

by Linda Galloway
2000 AAHPERD HFH Outstanding Coordinator

A successful Hoops for Heart event is dependant upon adequate planning because the event involves a large number of participants. Students participating in Hoops for Heart learn about heart disease and stroke and the lifelong health benefits of physical activity. In the process they learn about giving back to the community by raising funds to support further research in the fight against heart disease and stroke.

Factors critical to success

- Adequate planning
- Mark the date on your calendar at the start of school.
- Register with the American Heart Association, if you haven't done so.
- Establish a time (before/after school, during physical education, a particular month)
- Set the format (use several formats to increase participation)

Promote the educational value of the event

- Educate students about the threat of heart disease and stroke and the lifelong benefits of physical activity.
- Emphasize the opportunity for community service
- Personalize the fight against heart disease and stroke
- Integrate other subject areas with the event
- Make the event a school wide interdisciplinary unit or within physical education/exploratory area.

Market the event

- Spread the news
- Show the Hoops for Heart video to all the students over closed circuit TV.
- Announce the event in physical education classes and on the morning announcements.
- Publish a newsletter promoting HFH.

- Have students make posters to be displayed in local stores.
- Display the incentive prizes and wear your T-shirt.
- Contact area merchants for additional prizes.
- Send an article to the local newspaper
- Announce the names of students/classes who are leading in donations.

Collecting the donations

- Distribute the envelopes and explain how to collect the donations.
- Explain returning the permission form
- Set a deadline for turning in all donations (at least 3 days before the event)

Other

- Have class challenges
- Award prizes to the teacher with the winning class
- Set a minimum donation
- Give extra prizes
- Sell tickets to special tournament games, such as teacher-faculty events
- Video tape the event
- Call your AHA or State Coordinator if you have questions.

Following the event

- Distribute the prizes quickly
- Announce the names of the top students and classes
- Write thank you letters to local businesses who supported the event
- Write article for local newspaper
- Return the evaluation form to the AHA ♥





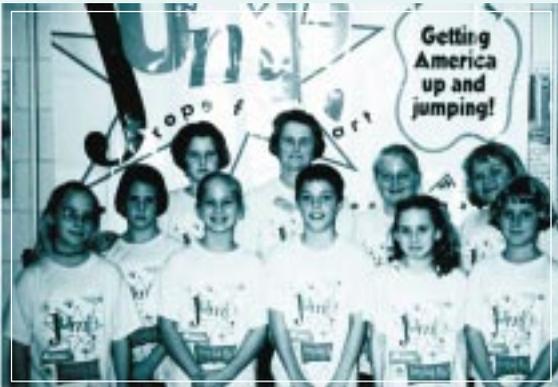
Demo Teams Jump to the Beat

Center Valley Heartbeats Win Golden Rule Award

by Sam Strasner

The Center Valley Elementary School Heartbeats (Russellville, AR) Jump Rope for Heart Demonstration Team was recently honored for its volunteerism when the group was chosen as a Finalist for the J.C. Penney Golden Rule Award.

The Golden Rule Award is given every year to recipients who are judged to “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Along with the honor, the Heartbeats also received a crystal flame symbolic of their volunteer efforts and a \$250 donation from J.C. Penney to the American Heart Association. ♥



First Row, Left-to-Right: Ashley Ferguson, Alex Wilcox, Derek Owens, Gena Bunch and Ashley Gee.

Second Row, Left-to-Right: Cora Housley, Kelsey Coulter, Mrs. Jeanie Strasner (coach), Jessica Mabry and Tanner Harris.

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battles and has gotten the upper hand on a war that most adults would have lost long ago. As with all wars, there are emotional and psychological wounds besides the physical damage. Yet Riley’s laughter rings throughout our home everyday. Physically she still battles some facial paralysis and has some vision problems, both of which are expected to improve with therapy. Yet in June of this year, Riley’s dream came true—she performed in her first ballet recital. ♥

2000 Demo Team Is All Positive

by Joy Brindley,
Alabama JRFH State Coordinator

For the past year, I have had the privilege of working closely with a wonderful group of children, as members of a Jump Rope for Heart Demonstration Team, the Wildcats. My fifth year as a Demo Team Coach has met all of the expectations that I have ever had! When my team, consisting of 18 fifth-graders, recently graduated from our elementary school, I regretted saying good-bye, but I thank God for giving me such a memorable year with them.

This year was all positive for our demo team. The disagreements were valuable learning experiences, and the disappointments were forgiven. The noncompetitive nature of a demonstration team provides a very positive atmosphere, and because we do not compete against anyone we are all winners. As we strive to help others, we also help ourselves. To share these positive experiences with a team while we work together to help others gives me such a feeling of pride.

After an incredible year for our team, the last week of school was a perfect ending. The day before school was out, we had our last team practice from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. Then, with a few minutes to warm-up, we prepared for our last demonstration...for special friends and family. When the show was over, “Good-bye” and “Thank you” was said repeatedly.

On the last day of school, our team was invited to perform at the Madison City Schools Cook-Out, for central office personnel and school board members. For the last few hours of our 1999-2000 school year, we were giving a jump rope demonstration for the administrators of our school system and performing for local television! The last phrase on the six o’clock news that night was, “By the way, they are sponsored by the American Heart Association.” I smiled with pride. ♥

Jump Rope for Heart Demo Teams in Orlando

by Beverly Gass

The Orlando All Stars, Jump Rope for Heart Demonstration Team, was composed of teams from three states—Texas, Kentucky and Louisiana. The representatives this year were: David Vaughn's Razz-Ma-Tazz and Tina Griffith's ZZ Skippers from Texas; Joy Heines' Heart Throbs and Laurie Workman's Star Jumpers from Kentucky; and Sunny Seale's Heart and Soul and Cindy Raymond's Jump Corps from Louisiana. These teams came together at the AAHPERD National Convention and Exposition to light up the floor with their amazing jump rope skills and out of this world performance!



Watching these teams perform one can see how very important these jumpers are to the success of the Jump Rope for Heart program. AAHPERD and the American Heart Association appreciates all of the hard work and dedication these young people give to help others. We look forward to more opportunities for demonstration teams from across the country to showcase their talents at future conventions. ♥

Paramount Carowinds Education Days

Richard Hatley, JRFH/HFH State Coordinator, NC

Paramount Carowinds, a theme park similar to Busch Gardens, sponsors Education Days each year. For three days in May, students from both North and South Carolina come to enjoy the rides, but more importantly view exhibits on math, science, physical fitness, performing arts and other educational formats.

This year, JRFH Demo teams from North Carolina participated in Education Days. Demo teams not only performed but also taught basic rope skills and helped to promote JRFH and fitness in general. The North Carolina Association for Athletics, Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (NCAAHPERD) and the American Heart Association (AHA) were provided with a booth to hand out information.

Representatives from Paramount Carowinds have already invited NCAAHPERD and AHA to participate in next year's Education Days. Brochures promoting Education Days will be mailed to over 32,000 people! Congratulations to the Carolinas for doing their part to promote Jump Rope For Heart and for educating so many people about heart disease and stroke. ♥

Leadership Development Conference 2000

Johanna VanArsdall
LDC Coordinator

AAHPERD President, Lucinda W. Adams led an enthusiastic crowd this year at the annual Leadership Development Conference held June 14-17 in Crystal City, Virginia. This annual gathering is designed to bring together the leadership of the Alliance from each state and district across the nation. The group of nearly 120 was formulated of 50 President-elects and 44 Executive Directors, as well as the National Association Executive Directors, National Association Representatives, the Board of Governors Representatives, and the AAHPERD Executive Committee.

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and durability, and appropriateness to fundraising cost were used in the final analysis.

The Joint Projects Committee has reviewed the process and believes this is a well documented, objective way to approach the incentive prize selection.

Healthy active children learn better. This is our challenge in education and for the future of our children. Jess Stuart, a backwoods Kentucky school teacher, perhaps said it best in his book *To Teach, To Love*, “Love, a spirit of adventure and excitement, must get back into our schools, without it, our schools will die.” Programs such as Jump and Hoops can help each of us capture this spirit of adventure and excitement and share it with the children and youth we work with. The partnership between AHA and AAHPERD can make this happen as the program continues to grow. ♥

“Love, a spirit of adventure and excitement, must get back into our schools, without it, our schools will die.”

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This year, the leaders had the unique opportunity to visit Capitol Hill. The agenda armed attendees with advocacy initiatives from each of the six National Associations, and on Friday, June 17, they went en masse to their Senators and Representatives and spoke on behalf of the Alliance. The final day of the conference was dedicated to learning Alliance policies and procedures and concluded with a festive graduation banquet. Some thoughts and comments from this year's conference were, “very informative, lots of fun, organized, energizing, one session “broke down barriers,” there were “good idea exchanges,” and “lots of communication opportunities.”

To continue to support the AAHPERD advocacy initiatives, next year the LDC will be held in a new location, the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, June 13-16, 2001, and will be led by our current President-elect, Glenn Roswal. ♥

...Continued from front page

School offers door prizes and memorial hearts. Shay Bolen of Woodlawn School provides grab bags for participants who turn in at least \$5.00. She also provides wood-burned plaques for team and individual award winners. The majority of the coordinators surveyed indicated they obtain many of their prizes and awards from local businesses that are happy to donate to the cause. Other motivational strategies may be used. For example, Mary Austin holds her event at the Hampton Coliseum. She and Margie Betelho of Gangster Elementary create a party atmosphere with a DJ and special guests. Of course, food is always a motivator, and most successful coordinators provide a variety of interesting, sometimes “heart-healthy” snacks.

Concept 3: Connect to other school or community happenings

Some of the coordinators logically schedule their events in February, in conjunction with the well-known heart healthy month and Valentine's Day. Within the school and physical education units, many find it very helpful to coordinate the event with their jump rope or basketball units, and use their event to help satisfy health and physical education standards of learning (SOL). Some successful coordinators explore how other classroom teachers might tie their content into the JRFH event. Using your imagination, you might speculate how history and art subjects could connect!

Concept 4: Advertise and Promote

It goes without saying that successful event organizers work to promote the event. The trick here is to get the American Heart Association to help. They will help you advertise with ready-made flyers. They will provide support for ordering prizes and completing the paperwork. Successful coordinators indicate they write several small articles and send pictures to local newspapers. The publicity the children receive is exciting. Parents are more than willing to help promote the event when their children are participating and in the news. Ask or assign duties!

Final Note

While we can easily reward those who have raised the most money, many professionals show commitment to JRFH despite limitations. We recognize the importance and value of commitment to the program. After all, isn't the final message of being physically active the most important one we deliver? ♥