

ThePulse

American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

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websites:

www.aahperd.org/jointprojects
www.americanheart.org

Blind, Deaf Kids Raise Awareness By Jumping Rope

Submitted By: Jennifer Lindgren, WLTX-TV

Spartanburg (WLTX-TV) How do you measure an accomplishment? For a group of kids at one South Carolina school, it's the length of a jump rope. This special group of elementary through high school-age students is defying the odds set against them.

The thirteen boys and girls who pound the gym floor at the South Carolina School For The Deaf and The Blind are getting ready for a routine they've practiced and presented many times before.

Now, now! yells their coach, Kim Speer, as one of her students leaps into the middle of Double-Dutch ropes.

Across the room, a group of four students stand close together, ready to leap into the air, as a fifth person swings a rope over their head. To their left, another student is bouncing up and down on a pogo stick, hopping in time to another rotating jump rope.

"Much better!" Coach Kim yells out.

The kids here come from across South Carolina (including the Midlands) and must be visually or hearing impaired to enroll in the state-funded school.

SCSDB has over three hundred students, many of whom board Monday through Friday then return home on the weekends.

"Good job!" a volunteer adds.

This is the Hoppin' Hornets twice weekly practice. Over and over again the thirteen students practice basic through advanced skills. Advanced Physical Education Specialist Kim Speer has worked with these kids for more than two decades. She says her boys and girls are constantly inventing new tricks.

"Back in 1984, there were no jump ropes here at the school. I didn't think that my students could jump rope," Speer said.

Her uncertainty came from the fact that all her students are visually or hearing impaired, and many have other disabilities as well. They started with jump ropes as a way for the students to have a simple, inexpensive physical activity. Speer says she never allows her students to use the word "can't," and soon, they were defying her expectations.

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Stories from the Heart



By: Donna Moore 2005 JRFH/HFH Grant Recipient Arizona & SWD JRFH/HFH
Coordinator Julia Randall Elementary School Payson, Arizona

Grant's Story

After teaching Physical Education for 23 years in the Gila Valley in southeastern Arizona, my family made the decision to relocate to the beautiful pines of Payson in northern Arizona. My first week teaching Physical Education at Julia Randall Elementary School, I was introduced to Grant Weame, an incredible third grade student. Grant was unable to participate in Physical Education due to the degeneration of a valve in his heart. He would be receiving open-heart surgery during our fall break. Even though you could see the twinkle in Grant's eyes, his body demonstrated signs consistent with his condition. He became increasingly weaker and noticeably tired as the days past. To fully understand Grant's story, let me take you back to the beginning.

Grant was born with Tetralogy of Fallot with Absence Pulmonary Valve Syndrome, an extremely rare congenital heart defect. Tetralogy of Fallot means there are four things wrong with the heart; there is a hole between the ventricles, there are many levels of obstruction from the right ventricle to the lungs, the aorta lies directly over the ventricular septal defect, and the right ventricle develops thickened muscle. This rare and complex heart defect occurs in about 5 out of every 10,000 babies. The complete lack of pulmonic valve tissue is known as Absence Pulmonary Valve Syndrome. This condition occurs in approximately 3% of patients with Tetralogy of Fallot.

At the age of 4 months, Grant underwent his first open-heart surgery at Phoenix Children's Hospital to repair his heart. During this initial surgery, all four defects associated with Tetralogy of Fallot were repaired and a human valve was placed in Grant's heart. Grant grew and physically developed as a normal little boy until his mom noticed Grant becoming more and more exhausted during the summer prior to his 3rd grade year. Following an exam with his cardiologist, Dr. Marcus in Scottsdale, Grant underwent a coronary angiogram in September of 2005. A coronary angiogram gives vital information regarding the blood pressure inside the heart, and shows how well the pumping chambers and valves are working. A catheter is inserted into the groin artery and up to the heart. Dr. Marcus discovered Grant's human valve had almost completely disintegrated causing a weak

surge of clean blood through the body. This had resulted in Grant's lack of energy.

Once again Grant was scheduled for open-heart surgery at Phoenix Children's Hospital to replace his disintegrated heart valve. This procedure took place during our two-week fall break. His heart surgeon, Dr. Teodori would now replace his failed heart valve with a porcine or pig valve. Following the surgery, Grant's mom immediately noticed his instant burst of energy. Grant was yet again on the road to a healthy active life.

Upon Grant's return to school following fall break, he proudly showed me the incision on his chest. It was amazing what Grant had gone through. Not only did he return with that twinkle I had always seen in his eyes, but also I quickly discovered Grant had an outgoing, fun-loving personality. Each day he attended Physical Education class, Grant would share a story or a joke to make me laugh. That memorable crooked smile was a sign of Grant's physical progress. Grant was going to make a full recovery. Toward the end of my first year in Payson, Grant informed me he would be moving to Duncan in southeastern Arizona. I joked with Grant, telling him he couldn't leave the JRE Bulldogs and become a Duncan Wildcat. I was saddened to see Grant move away.

The following year, I often wondered how Grant was doing. During this second year in Payson, we began an American Heart Association tradition for our Jump Rope For Heart event. My students placed "In Honor" or "In Memory" hearts around our gym. I spoke to each class regarding their former classmate and friend who had undergone open-heart surgery the previous year. I informed them the money they would raise through our Jump Rope For Heart event would help the American Heart Association fund vital research projects similar to the procedures that saved Grant's life. Needless to say, our Jump Rope For Heart event was a huge success. We raised \$10,428.42; over double the amount we had raised the previous year. Our Jump Rope For Heart was in honor of Grant.

Prior to writing this article, I contacted Grant's mom Jill to see how Grant was doing. He is currently a healthy 11-year-old 5th grade student at Duncan Elementary School. Grant is no longer on any heart medication and his only restrictions are he can never play football or wrestle due to the physical contact. Other than these restrictions, Grant is a very physically active young man. He enjoys scouting and bikes daily.

So often I am asked, "Why do you put so much effort into your Jump Rope For Heart event?" My reply, I do it for Grant and the countless other individuals our event will save through the American Heart Association's research and educational programs. ♥

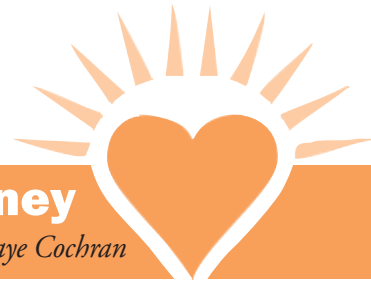
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SURVIVOR STORIES

A Father and Son Heart Defect Journey

Written By: Tj McCathran, Submitted By: Kaye Cochran



❖ **Ostium Primum Atrial Septal Defect (ASD)**

Through a tiny ellipse of tissue called the sinoatrial node (situated in the back wall of the top of the heart's right atrium), a set of signals originates to ensure each of our heart muscles operates as they should. The heart, as designed, is the world's best engineered and most efficient pump as these muscles operate every second of every day and at least 2.5 billion consecutive times during a normal lifespan transporting blood through the body in a continuous circle. This is how the heart should work.

❖ **February 14, 2007**

On February 14, 2007 (ironically the day recognized as National Congenital Heart Awareness Day) my wife, Amy, and I were reminded that at times this continuous circle is damaged. Our 14 day old son Jake was diagnosed with an Ostium Primum Atrial Septal Defect (ASD). Basically, this defect consists of a hole between the 2 atria (upper collecting chambers of the heart) with a defect in one of the heart valves. The only solution to ensure a full lifespan and prevent more complicated cardiovascular problems is repair by open heart surgery. This just so happened to be the same defect I was diagnosed with and had repaired 11 years earlier at the age of twenty one. My defect was successfully repaired with only a little bit of mitral valve regurgitation. I am fortunate that this repaired defect still allows me to play tennis and do things like climb the 14,000 ft. Mt. Princeton in Colorado.

❖ **Growing Up With the American Heart Association**

It's strange, but in some way, our family has always been connected to and involved with the American Heart Association. Growing up, my Aunt, Kaye Cochran, was heavily involved with Jump Rope For Heart in Louisiana as the State JRFH Coordinator and a teacher. Kaye also served as JRFH Demonstration Team coach for the Red Hots, in Caddo Parish Public School System in Shreveport, La. Kaye is now past president of LAHPERD (Louisiana Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance), the Caddo Parish Wellness Coordinator, and a member of the AHA/AAHPERD Joint Projects committee. I can remember participating in several Jump Rope For Heart school events and learning the importance of having a healthy heart early on in life. Little did I know just how important it would be for me to have a heart as healthy as possible to help me through open heart surgery.

❖ **Baby Jake's Surgery**

Jake's story however, would be a little different than mine as we soon found out that that Jake's hole was almost half an inch in diameter (much bigger than mine). This would very quickly begin to create more complicated problems..... if not corrected within the first year of life. So, on December 17th, 2007, at the Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, TX, Jake underwent successful open heart surgery to correct his defect. An x-ray taken just three days post operation already showed new capillaries forming in the lungs indicating increased cardiovascular ability and that Jake's heart was operating as a more efficient pump. We also noticed that Jake no longer sweats like he has just run a marathon when feeding. Four

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days post operation with a split sternum, cut in half chest muscles, and back muscles that were just compressed way more than they were designed to be, Jake pulled himself up in his crib. Five days post operation; Jake was not only crawling again but climbing our stairs. I don't know if that's just another one the body's amazing ways of resilience or if he's really that smart. As parents we are choosing to believe that's it more of the latter.

❖ Our Appreciation to the American Heart Association

As my family can attest and as the first word of the defect suggests, going through an atrial septal defect (ASD) and open heart surgery is a trial. However, it's a trial that has been conquered and continues to be conquered everyday with the help of organizations like the American Heart Association.

Nationally, Congenital Heart Defects (CHD) continue to be the most common birth defect and is the number one cause of death from birth related defects during the first year of life. Technology has brought us to a point where specifically, ASD's that are corrected can lead to an excellent quality of life with only a likelihood of re-operation to repair or replace the mitral valve many years later. As we have learned from others, congenial heart defects are not always something that can be fully cured, but they can be managed. It is said that the goal of any CHD survivor is to live a life long enough to die of something other than their heart defect.

We believe that when you have a strong faith and technology at places like the Texas Children's Hospital, miracles happen. While we cannot really help with the miracle part we can help with the technologies available. This technology takes funding and Congenital Heart Defect research continues to be under-funded. According to the Children's Heart Foundation, nearly twice as many children die from CHD's in the United States each year as from all forms of childhood cancers combined, yet funding for pediatric cancer research is five times higher than funding for CHD's. We have a challenge to raise the awareness for CHD's. So, when you hear of stories like ours and are in any way drawn to them please think about donating to the American Heart Association to help create another miracle.

❖ Happy 1st Birthday, Jake McCathran!

What a difference a year makes! One year ago was Jake's first cardiology appointment. He received his official diagnosis of his ASD and we discussed plans to eventually fix his heart. On that day we were told Jake could wait until he was 3-4 years old for surgery. Who would have known that Jake's condition would require surgery sooner than expected. February 14th is National Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Day and means so much more to us than just Valentine's Day had before.

On Saturday, Feb. 9. 2008, we felt that it was important to celebrate Jake's recovery from heart surgery during his first birthday party. In honor of his fixed heart, Amy decided on a Valentine's theme for the party even though the potential for too much pink for a boy's birthday party existed. However, Amy worked hard to make sure there was not a speck of pink at the party going so far as taking out all of the pink m & m's out of the Valentine mix. The heart shaped cake was just perfect!

We celebrate Jake's successful repaired heart today and pray for others who are going through similar situations. We cannot offer any medical advice other than to follow your cardiologist's recommendations, but my family does have personal experience in both adult and pediatric open heart surgery and recovery so please feel free to email me if we may be of help to someone in a similar situation. ♥



Story continued from page 1...

"They can jump, and they are so good," Speer said.

Five years ago, the American Heart Association caught on and invited the Hoppin Hornets to be one of three demo teams in South Carolina. The School For The Deaf and The Blind has always held an annual Jump Rope The Heart event, but the demo team takes raising awareness a step further.

Ten times a year, the Hornets travel to public elementary schools around the state and put on a performance to energize other kids about jump rope.

"They can do stuff we can't even do! I think it's really impressive,"

said Katie Lloyd, a fifth-grader at Anderson Mill Road Elementary School in Moore. Lloyd and her classmates saw a Hoppin' Hornets performance last week. SCSDB parents say the team has been an unbelievable confidence booster for their kids.

"It makes her happy, and what makes her happy makes me happy," said Mary Belton.

Belton, who is from Cassett, Kershaw County, has a thirteen-year-old daughter who began attending the School For The Deaf and The Blind last fall.

"Self-esteem. Her self-esteem is a lot better than it was," Belton said.

The Beltons made the decision to take Jasmine out of Kershaw County Public Schools and enroll her at SCSDB in the hope that she would excel further in an environment focused on needs like hers.

"At the other schools, because of her disability, I don't think she would have been able to be on any teams, and that means a lot to her," Belton said.

Jasmine says she's enjoying her new school, and her new place on the jump rope team.

"It's fun! That's about it!" she said with a smile. ♥



JUMP ACROSS THE NATION

CONCORD ROAD CELEBRATES THEIR 25TH JUMP ROPE FOR HEART!

By: Suzanne Sawyer, AHA

On Wednesday, February 6, students at Concord Road Elementary School in Ardsley jumped all over heart disease and stroke by participating in the school's 25th annual Jump Rope For Heart. The students raised more than \$13,000 this year for the American Heart Association. Over the past 25 years, Concord Road has raised more than \$200,000 for the American Heart Association.

"The event was great this year," said Karen McGeory, physical education teacher at Concord Road who organizes Jump Rope For Heart every year with fellow physical education teachers, Tom Elliott and Julie Ford. "The staff, community and students really put their hearts into it."

Donations raised during Jump Rope For Heart help fund research to fight heart disease and stroke and also support the

American Heart Association's public and professional education programs. Heart disease is the No. 1 killer in America and stroke is No. 3.

The students in third and fourth grade at Concord Rd formed jumping groups for the day of the event and were busy coming up with names for their teams and team t-shirts that they made with the help of their parents. On the day of the Jump Rope For Heart event, the third grade came down to the gym for the first hour and the fourth grade for the second. A local DJ (and alum of Concord Rd) spun tunes during the event. Parents, siblings, teachers, administrators and others stood on the sidelines cheering on the students. Some adults even took up ropes to jump with the kids!

At the end of the third grade jump, Dawn Catucci gave a speech that reminded everyone

why they do this event every year. She told the story of her son, who is now a Junior at Byram Hills High School. He was born with a heart problem and had surgery to fix that problem when he was only two days old. He had to have another surgery about a year ago, but is doing fine now. She noted the advancements that cardiologists have been able to make in the past fifteen years with the help of the American Heart Association. "This time around, the surgery only took a few hours. He was up and playing sports in no time," said Mrs. Catucci, a psychologist at Ardsley High School.

Jump Rope For Heart is a program that promotes physical fitness and heart health through the fun activity of jumping rope. It is co-sponsored by the American Heart Association and the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. ♥

A Red Dress Decision

By: Amy Kaiser – MN JRFH State Coordinator

5th grade students at Lincoln Park School in Duluth, MN had some heart-felt decisions to make. Each student was given one "Red Dress Pin" from the American Heart Association in honor of National Go Red for Women Day.

Physical Education teacher Amy Kaiser led a discussion with the students about the importance of women taking care of their heart health. Students were quick to note that their female caretakers, their Moms and Grandmothers often cared for others more than caring for themselves. Then came decision time! Each student was challenged to take their red dress pin, give it to some woman they cared about and to ask them if they were doing all they could for their "heart-health".

Here are a few of their responses:

"I gave the pin to my mom and she said she would try to stop smoking."

"My Grandma said WOW!"

"My Grandma pinched my cheeks and kissed me!"

"My mom was very happy."

As these 5th graders prepare for their Jump Rope For Heart Event they plan on jumping in honor of these important women in their lives. ♥

Be Happy, Be Healthy; Be An Advocate

By: Kris Fritz, WI AAHPERD

The Early Learning (Pre K) Center in Sheboygan, WI successfully implemented the National and WI Presidential themes into its JUMP event in early December of 2007. Although most participants do not yet have rope jumping motor skills, they enthusiastically embraced a JUMP event designed to correspond to their physical skills and connect to a school wide activity during what is used as a Parent-Teacher-Child contact event. Children had read the book, "Gingerbread Man" by Brenda Parkes & Judith Smith in their classrooms. When they came to PA (physical activity/gym), facilitated by a retired Sheboygan Area School District Physical Education instructor, they engaged in walking, marching, skipping, galloping and running around an established course which illustrated parts of the book. Ms. Kris previously worked on the motor skills and cognitive concepts of developing skills and healthy hearts. She altered the story ending slightly to reflect the fact that the Gingerbread Man escapes the fox, rather than be eaten by him, stressing that he and the children taking his part in the course run had strong minds and hearts so as to out think and out run the fox.

Children were given a tiny paper heart prior to each lap made upon the established course and upon completion of a lap, they put their heart into a collection box and received a new one for the next lap. This facilitated the counting of accumulated laps during the Gingerbread Run/JUMP activity during



children's PA days. At the end of the PA days, Ms. Kris counted the hearts and divided by seventeen (the number of laps equal to one mile in the basement facility) to determine how many miles had been run to "strengthen participant hearts."

This process was repeated on the evening and morning the Parent-Teacher-Child Gingerbread House making project was done in individual classrooms. Parents, children, siblings and even grandparents walked or ran, moving around the course, often multiple times while stuffing the collection box with tiny hearts and strengthening their own. Upon completion of the event, 210 miles had been covered on the course and all who took part were just a little bit healthier for having engaged in a fun event focusing upon healthy heart awareness.

Prior to the Gingerbread Run/JUMP event, parents had already been asked to donate supplies such as graham crackers and other items to help in the construction of Gingerbread Houses that children would make and then take home with them. The Principal was hesitant to send a second letter asking for JUMP donations. Thus, it was decided that for this first year initial Gingerbread Run/JUMP the school SET (school effectiveness team/site based management team) would make a donation to the WI chapter of the AHA. The decision was made to give \$210, reflecting a dollar for each mile covered on the course.

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Although in the larger scope of JUMP events, this money raised is relatively small, the foundations laid for educational value and for future participation as children progress through the grades is without limit. The Early Learning Center is taking steps to improve the health of children and family members while supporting research and education for heart disease by means of their first JUMP event. The accompanying photos illustrate children and family members so engaged in the Gingerbread Run/ JUMP to strengthen their “hearts” and those of others. ♥



2007-2008 AAHPERD JRFH/HFH GRANT RECIPIENTS

Karen Fisher, Myra Terwilliger Elementary, Gainesville, FL

Joy Sorenson, Valders Elementary, Valders, WI

Tom Wallat, Enterprise Elementary, Federal Way, WA

Michael Cavallaro, Daniels Farm Elementary, Trumbull, CT

Anne Zengerle, Autumn Lane, Rochester, NY

Lisa Campbell, Holley Elementary, Holley, NY

Karen Mannix, Talkeetna Elementary and Trapper Creek Elementary, Talkeetna, AK

Julie Campos, Brady Elementary, Aurora, IL

Randy Sparks, Tazewell Elementary, Tazewell, VA

Chad Triolet, Deep Creek Elementary, Chesapeake, VA

Brenda Erdman, Westside Elementary, Reedsburg, WI

Jeanne Rucker, Washington Elementary, Hays, KS

Jim Brown, Slate Creek Elementary, Newton, KS

Wendy Scholten, Ridgeview Elementary, Olathe, KS

Roberta Sipe, Rosa Parks-Edison Elementary, Indianapolis, IN

2007-2008 AAHPERD OUTSTANDING COORDINATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS

2008 Jump Rope For Heart Coordinators of the Year

Donna Moore, Julia Randall Elementary School, Payson, AZ

Gary Spinney, Rockport Elementary School, Rockport, ME

2008 Hoops For Heart Coordinator of the Year

Charlene Francisco, Powell Middle School, Spring Hill, FL

Rockport Fundraiser Games

By: Gary Spinney, Rockport Elementary, Rockport, ME



Jump Rope For Heart Money Game

Warm-up:

Before the game starts all participants jump rope for 30 seconds to one minute in order to receive three twenty-dollar bills (laminated if possible) amounting to \$60.00. Beginning jumpers can jump without a jump rope.

Instructions:

Everyone is a tagger (JRFH fundraiser). Everyone is a runner (JRFH sponsors). When you are tagged you must say "hello" because you are at this moment the sponsor. The tagger is at this moment the fundraiser, and she/he asks the sponsor "Will you sponsor me for the AHA to combat the number 1 and 3 killers of men and women which is heart disease and strokes. The runner (JRFH sponsor) must say, "yes" and give the fundraiser \$20.00. The fundraiser (JRFH tagger) must say, "Thank you" within a reasonable amount of time (5sec), or the sponsor may ask for the \$20.00 back.

If the a student runs out of money they must go to the "fitness bank" (Teacher) and perform with a single jump rope for 10-20 seconds to earn another \$60.00. Beginning jumpers can jump without a jump rope.

Important note: When two students are engaged in a transaction other students must stay a good distant away until they are finished.



Hoops For Heart Money Game

Warm-up:

Before the game starts all participants perform ball-handling skills that they have learned in gym classes for 30 seconds to one minute in order to receive three twenty-dollar bills (laminated if possible) amounting to \$60.00.

Instructions:

Everyone is a tagger (HFH fundraiser). Everyone is a runner (HFH sponsors).

When you are tagged you must say, "hello" because you are at this moment the sponsor. The tagger is at this moment the fundraiser, and she/he asks the sponsor "Will you sponsor me for the AHA to combat the number 1 and 3 killers of men and women which is heart disease and strokes. The runner (HFH sponsor) must say, "yes" and the sponsor must give the fundraiser \$20.00. The fundraiser must say, "Thank you" within a reasonable amount of time (5sec), or the sponsor may ask for the \$20.00 back.

If the a student runs out of money they must go to the "fitness bank" (Teacher operated) and perform ball handling skills for 20-30 seconds to earn another \$60.00.

Important note: When two students are engaged in a transaction other students must stay a good distant away until they are finished.