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The next deadline for submissions is January 15, 2012.

Email or fax articles to adavis@aahperd.org or 703.476.9527.

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Stories from the Heart

Mending Hearts and Sails *By Neil Turner*

The following feature story is an excerpt from a donation letter written by Neil Turner, father of Ella Turner.

We've all heard the expression about taking the wind out of someone's sails. Tuesday afternoon, I saw the most vivid illustration of this saying I have ever witnessed. Unfortunately, I was the guilty party and worse, it was my own daughter's sails.

School was letting out and Ella bounded out the doors with a huge smile and arms spread wide. Her jacket did flap behind her like sails as ran to me.

"Daddy, we are going to raise money for people with bad hearts and I want to raise a \$1,000 at least. Probably more! They are going to send home information on Thursday and we watched a video and it helps people with bad hearts. They showed some kids that were 6 years old like me that it helps. And there are jump ropes and the gym teacher..." What her words lacked in details and organization, she was making up with speed and enthusiasm.

The words I fixated on were the "more than \$1,000" portion and that is what I chose to interrupt her with.

"Darling, a thousand dollars is a lot of money. Trying to raise more than a thousand will be very hard."

"Well. At least a thousand dollars then", she replied.

"I don't think you understand how much money that is."

At this point we had stopped on the sidewalk, no longer making progress to the car.

"No. You don't understand." She said it firmly, but not disrespectfully. Her voice had a tone of one part frustration and two parts determination. "They help kids with bad hearts. They help kids like Colby."

It all became very clear, very quickly. For Ella, this wasn't just another school activity to be excited about. This was personal. This was about her sister. This was a chance for her to be actively involved in making a difference in another child's life - a child that was facing some difficult challenges, like her little sister did.



Ella Turner (left) with her sister, Colby.

Continued on page 7

Best Practices for Successful Events

Changes That Can Make a Difference

By Anke Hill

The theme of our Jump Rope For Heart event this school year was 'Get up and move!' Even though my school experienced financial challenges this year, I was able to educate all the students about keeping their hearts healthy so they will avoid becoming a victim of heart attack or stroke. This year, I used the survivor stories as teaching tools to teach the students about the anatomy of the heart. Anatomy is part of the curriculum each year, and connecting it to a personal story helped the students better understand the workings of a healthy heart.

Our big event was held after running the Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser for two weeks. To increase community participation, we decided to host the event on a Saturday morning to get more families involved. We decorated our play area and set up activity centers for attendees of every age to enjoy. Music blasted from the boom box as the students showed off their jump rope skills. We offered healthy snacks, fruit and water at no charge, thank-you gifts in the form of heart-shaped stickers, pencils and erasers as well as informational goodie bags for the parents. In my address to the families I thanked them for taking the time to come out, thanked the parents for being a role model, and for encouraging our children to make healthy choices.

Every year I come up with a rewarding activity for all the students who raise \$20 or more. To get the whole school involved, I convinced two additional teachers and the school principal to participate in the culminating activity. This year's activity: "The Crazy Splash". With the families seated around the school pavilion, the teachers and principal took their seats on chairs circled in the center. Each student received a ticket for every \$20 raised during the two weeks leading up to the final event. With that ticket the child was able to pick up a soaked sponge out of a bucket, run to us sitting in the middle and squeeze the water on whomever they would like. The students had 20 seconds to go back and forth until time was up. A timer projected onto the wall encouraged everyone to count down the remaining seconds. The best part: there was NO CLEAN UP necessary. Despite the financial setback our community has experienced, this year's Jump Rope For Heart event saw improved community participation over previous years. More families were able to participate and show their support, even if they were unable to donate money. Everyone involved got the message that there are many ways to be a heart hero!



Physical Educator Anke Hill (right), recipient of the 2011 AAHPERD Jump Rope For Heart Grant, got soaked during "The Crazy Splash."

Tips from Anke Hill:

- Use survivor stories as teaching tools.
- Hold events during the weekend or after school for increased family participation.
- Create creative and cost-free incentives to reward students.

Featured School Event

South Brunswick Middle School: Jump Rope For Heart

By Hillary Snow • Photos by Kim Adams

As an educator, Brockton Ahrens is always looking for ways to raise the bar for student achievement.

Recently, the South Brunswick Middle School principal took his quest to a higher level.

Making good on a promise he made to students, Ahrens spent Thursday on the school's roof. Equipped with a desk, laptop, cell phone, lots of sunscreen and a secret arsenal of water balloons, Ahrens worked and played all day in celebration of the school's most successful Jump Rope For Heart event to date.

Through a national fundraiser sponsored by the American Heart Association and the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, students solicit pledges of support for their rope-jumping skills.

At South Brunswick Middle's 15th Annual Jump Rope For Heart on March 11, approximately 385 sixth, seventh and eighth-grade students skipped and hopped their way to a total of \$12,762 in donations.

South Brunswick Middle has also raised more money for Jump Rope For Heart this year than any other participating school in the state.

"That's unbelievable. The most we've ever raised is (\$10,000)," physical education teacher Melanie Champion, who organizes the fundraiser, noted.

Champion wasn't even planning to set the stakes so high this year. That is, until Ahrens made students an offer they couldn't resist.

"Normally we raise around \$7,500 and so I was going to stick to around \$8,000 and Mr. Ahrens comes in and pumps up the kids



**Special thanks to
Melanie Champion,
physical educator at
South Brunswick
Middle School, who
organized the event.**

and says, 'No, we can do better than that,'" Champion said.

To motivate Jump Rope For Heart participants, Ahrens vowed to work on the roof for one day if they could raise \$10,000.

"I just thought, 'It's been pretty nice outside. I'll move my office outside.' Then I'm thinking, 'How can I make it more elaborate?' and I came up with the idea of going up to the roof," Ahrens recalled. "I just wanted to do something a little bit different." He added an extra incentive—students could pelt him with water balloons.

Apparently, it worked.

"I was just shocked when it came the day to jump and our sixth-graders raised over \$6,000 ... just the sixth grade. Before the eighth-grade (classes) came in, we had already raised over \$10,000. I came in (Ahrens' office) teasing him, saying, 'You're going on the roof,'" Champion said. Ahrens didn't mind too much.

The hardest part, he said, was simply making the climb. "Here is this big ladder ... it was like going up to the Shuttle. I thought, 'How am I going to get up there?' But I got up there and I just looked back and I thanked God the sun was out," he said.

Once on the roof, Ahrens relaxed and enjoyed the view—welcoming students and parents in the morning—before getting bombed with water balloons in the afternoon.

Superintendent Dr. Edward Pruden kept him company for a while, bringing along a mask to keep out the pollen. Ahrens even managed to work on a few projects, and have a lot of fun, in between.

Continued on page 5

Featured School Event Continued

"We work hard and there is so much going on with the budget right now. Everybody is worried about their jobs. And there is so much going on with state testing; there are a lot of pressures there. We needed to get away from that a little bit," he said. With a great vantage point and buckets of balloons at his fingertips, Ahrens couldn't resist splashing some unlucky students who passed by down below.

"He had a blast. So, don't let him fool you," Champion joked. All jokes aside, Ahrens and Champion agreed there were some important lessons behind the bet.

Champion said nearly everyone at South Brunswick Middle School has been touched in some way by cardiovascular disease.

"When I do the kick-off, I ask the kids, 'Raise your hand if you have had anybody in your family has had a heart attack or stroke.' You wouldn't believe how many raise their hands," she said. "So, (Jump Rope For Heart) is something they can get into, something they understand and can believe in." Students also jumped this year in honor of two of their peers who have heart abnormalities. Ahrens hopes his silly stunt sends a lasting message to his students to hold themselves to high standards in school and beyond.

"As (assistant superintendent) Bob Grimes told me when I started here, you've got to lead from out front," he said. "And if you make a promise, you've got to live up to that promise."

Meet the Joint Projects Committee

The Joint Projects Committee (JPC) at AAHPERD serves as a project workgroup supporting the partnership between the AHA and AAHPERD. JPC members develop new strategies and manage initiatives that benefit the growth of the Jump Rope For Heart and Hoops For Heart programs. Through subcommittees, the JPC completes tangible projects and participates in the selection of award and grant winners.

In addition to the AHA National Youth Market Consultant and the AAHPERD Joint Projects Program Manager, the JPC is comprised of five volunteers chosen by the AHA and five chosen by AAHPERD. Volunteers are selected from a variety of states, representing many different districts and state AHPERD organizations. All selected JPC volunteers serve on the committee for three years.

JPC Members:

Chad Triolet, JPC Chair, AAHPERD Volunteer (2012)
Donna Hester, AAHPERD Volunteer (2012)
Deb LaComb, AHA Volunteer (2012)
Sasha Taylor, AHA Volunteer (2012)
Brenda Erdman, AAHPERD Volunteer (2013)
Eric Bauman, AAHPERD Volunteer (2013)
Earl Bright, AHA Volunteer (2013)
Leslie Collier, AHA Volunteer (2013)
Brenda Sharp, AAHPERD Volunteer (2014)
Dr. Laura Spencer, AHA Volunteer (2014)



Committee Member Spotlight: Sasha Taylor, AHA Volunteer

Sasha Taylor has been active in the Ohio state AHPERD organization, has presented at state conventions and currently mentors Ohio HPE Majors. She has coached three co-ed Jump Rope State Demo Teams and received the AAHPERD JRFH/HFH Grant in 2007. Sasha teaches 3-5th Grade Physical Education and has conducted a JRFH event for the past 13 years. Sasha's school, Bell Creek Intermediate School, raised almost \$11,000 for the AHA in 2011. As part of the fundraising festivities, Sasha invited students to cut her hair and duct tape the school principal to the wall. Sasha Taylor has been an American Heart Association volunteer on the Joint Projects Committee since 2009. She is passionate about JRFH and strives to increase her students' awareness of heart disease all year, but dedicates her work annually to two former students, Jake and Connor, who died from heart complication issues.

State Spotlight

Wisconsin AHPERD Advocates with 'Heart'

By Kris Fritz, WHPE Past President

Thank you Kate Barrett, NASPE, the AHA and all others who have helped us in this endeavor.



The HPERD profession has come a long way over many years. However, I fear and know it is still thought of by many as a bunch of unrelated activities that keep children happy and active in the gym. Far too many school administrators, school board members and parents don't view Physical Education as an element of the curriculum that is (according to Dr. Kate Barrett, now UNC-Greensboro Professor Emeritus) based upon "clear outcomes with measurable objectives." Hence, PE is often the first area to be eliminated when budget, staffing and or facility issues arise.

Wisconsin Health and Physical Education (formerly WAHPERD) has partnered with the American Heart Association to change this perception by participating in the WI Association of School Boards and Administrators annual conference. Each year, the WHPE sends a delegation of current and past officers to staff a booth whereby through face-to-face conversations and handouts, we are changing the negative perceptions that those people who hold decision-making power in the schools may have about Physical Education and its value.

This year, the role of the delegation was expanded from that of staffing the booth in the Exhibits' Hall, to also conducting a session entitled, "Meet the Experts – Fighting Obesity via Physical Activities / Generate Funds". During the session, Patty Kestell, WHPE HFH Chair; Neil Seering, JRFH Chair and Kris Fritz, TOY and WHPE Past President, conducted a demonstration involving implementation of standards' based activities used for everyday curriculum that could be turned into age appropriate Jump/Hoops events from Pre K through Middle School to generate funds for AHA and ultimately individual schools through US Games.

Twelve students were brought in from Greenfield Bilingual School Milwaukee by their PE teacher, Gail Milbrath, and they enthusiastically and actively demonstrated their skills.

The session culminated with a short informative piece presented by the AHA and a summation by Kris who read the NASPE Positive Physical Educators' Pledge. One Milwaukee administrator was most impressed, and asked where he could obtain the document for use with his staff for an upcoming in-service day.

WHPE has taken the WASB's convention theme, "Bold Steps," and put it into action through vision, passion and innovation by means of this advocacy undertaking. WHPE is making a concentrated attempt to implement the NASPE Action Steps and educate school administrators on the importance of the HPERD profession. Through collaboration with the American Heart Association, we have:

- 1) Given Out the Facts
- 2) Obtained / Shared Resources
- 3) Gotten Involved

The WHPE BOD has validated our efforts by continuing to support the budget line item that covers the costs of participation in the annual School Board Conference. WHPE President, Brian Marx said, "It was great to get our message directly to those in decision – making

The 2011 Booth was staffed by WHPE President Brian Marx; Recording Secretary, Jan Kunert; MW TOY's and Past Presidents, Kris Fritz and Doug Kane; Tammy Rocker, Regional AHA VP and other Heart staff. WHPE, Ex. Director, Keith Bakken, is also a school board member in his home district and was on hand to oversee the operation of the booth.

State Spotlight Continued



WHPE Past President, Kris Fritz, presented with WHPE HFH Chair, Patty Kestell, and WHPE JRFH Chair, Neil Seering.

roles through this year's expanded format at the WASB Conference."

Secretary Kunert, who organized and coordinated the 2011 WHPE WASB Conference involvement indicated, "It was an honor for me to observe three top-notch presenters represent WHPE – demonstrating their expertise with students and communicating with the attending WASB members! Our members were able to directly interact with district administrators and school

board members – those same persons who regulate and impact funding for public school programming and the employment of instructional staff. Because of this involvement, the future of Physical Education in Wisconsin is brighter.

Stories from the Heart Continued

Now, I need to clarify something here. Colby's condition went far beyond heart problems. It's hard enough to explain Geleophysic Dysplasia to medical professionals and even harder to other adults. Explaining it to a six year old seemed riskier than the potential benefits, so for now we've kept the explanation simplified for Ella, so her basic understanding is that Colby's heart was very sick. That is true, but obviously there is much more to it all, but we are saving those conversations for another day and this was not the day.

Understanding her better, I tried to explain the situation better to her. I told her how good it was that she wanted to help other kids and let her know that we would help raise some money. But I again tried to point out how much money \$1,000 is and that we shouldn't set such a high goal. Part of it was out of protecting her from disappointment and part of was protecting myself from getting wrapped up in asking people for donations. I told her we would look at the information on Thursday and talk about it more then.

She didn't protest anymore, but you could see her mind at work trying to make sense of what I was saying and why I was saying it, but also trying to figure out just what it was that she could do. Our walk to the car resumed, but her smile was gone, as was the bounce in her step and the flap of her jacket. Gone was the wind in her sails.

That night, I thought a lot about that exchange. The more I thought about it, the worse I felt about what I had done. I had robbed her of the joy she was feeling about trying to help people and robbed her of the chance to dream big. The idea of protecting her from failure lost merit the more I thought about it and even if it hadn't, if it was at the expense of her ambition and joy, the price was too high. How many times had I told her she could accomplish big things if she worked hard? I realized I didn't want to make those words hollow.

The next morning on the way to school, I apologized to her. I told her I had made a mistake and that I was sorry. We spent some more time talking about what a big goal raising \$1,000 is, but that if she wanted to try, I would support her however I could. We also talked about what it means to do our best and that if she fell short of her goal, she had nothing to be ashamed of. Whatever amount she raised, she would be helping kids with sick hearts.

Her smiles and nods let me know that she understood. She wasn't worried about falling short. All she wanted was the chance to try.

¹Rockwall ISD Kindergarten Student is Number One Fund Raiser in the State for Jump Rope for Heart. The Rockwall ISD. Retrieved October 10, 2011. <http://www.rockwallisd.com/Departments/Communications/RockwallISDNews>.

Update on Ella Turner:

Ella Turner raised over \$4,000 in her Jump Rope For Heart (JRFH) efforts this past year. She was the number one JRFH fundraiser in Texas and among the top five JRFH fundraisers in the nation. Ella was honored at the Nebbie Williams Elementary School Jump Rope For Heart assembly by representatives from the American Heart Association. Ella's school principal commented, "I am so inspired by Ella's kindness and desire to help other people in memory of her sister, Colby. She set a very large goal of \$1000 and has more than exceeded that goal! Ella shows us all that with a little compassion and kindness, we can each make a difference and help others. Ella has the biggest heart a kindergartner can have!"¹

To learn more about Ella and her success please visit:
<http://www.nbcdfw.com/news/health/Rockwall-Girl-Raises-Money-for-Heart-Association-118430819.html>

Prospective AAHPERD members who hold JRFH or HFH events qualify for an AAHPERD's exclusive electronic membership at a discounted rate, only \$65 a year!

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- **Access to members-only content of the AAHPERD website** complete with journal archives and valuable content on a wide range of topics that will benefit you and the students you are dedicated to helping
- **EtCetera** a weekly email newsletter covering a variety of topics relevant to AAHPERD members

With 20,000 members, the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD) is the largest organization that supports professionals involved in physical education, recreation, sport and coaching, dance, health education, and all specialties related to achieving a healthy and active lifestyle.

Go online to www.aahperd.org or call 1-800-213-7193 x490.

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In partnership with Eastern District AAHPERD and Massachusetts AHPERD

Get Involved!

Have you registered to hold an event to showcase the importance of physical activity this school year? You can build a continuously supportive environment for physical education in your school community by making Jump Rope For Heart or Hoops For Heart a fun, annual tradition! Many physical educators have highlighted the importance of physical education to their community by holding annual Jump Rope For Heart and Hoops For Heart programs.

Register to hold your event today and get your community moving! Visit: www.heart.org/jump or www.heart.org/hoops to build a lasting tradition in your school.

Upcoming State AHPERD Conventions

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| 10/20 – 10/22 | MD State AHPERD Convention |
| 10/22 | CO State AHPERD Convention |
| 10/27 – 10/28 | AZ State AHPERD Convention |
| 11/2 | NJ State AHPERD Convention |
| 11/3 – 11/5 | MI State AHPERD Convention |
| 11/10 – 11/11 | VT State AHPERD Convention |
| 11/11 – 11/13 | VA State AHPERD Convention |
| 11/13 – 11/15 | AL State AHPERD Convention |
| 11/16 – 11/19 | NY State AHPERD Convention |
| 11/17 - 11/18 | CT State AHPERD Convention |
| 11/30 – 12/2 | OH State AHPERD Convention |

Resources

AAHPERD:

www.aahperd.org/jump
www.aahperd.org/hoops
www.letsmoveinschool.org

AHA:

www.heart.org/jump
www.heart.org/hoops
www.yourethecure.org

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Get Involved!



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www.heart.org