

# The Pulse

American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance



American Heart Association  
Fighting Heart Disease and Stroke

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websites: [www.aahperd.org](http://www.aahperd.org)  
[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)



See The Pulse on-line at  
[www.aahperd.org/thepulse](http://www.aahperd.org/thepulse)

## Jumping in Philly! JRFH/HFH at the National AAHPERD Convention and Exposition

The National AAHPERD Convention and Exposition is rapidly approaching and the Joint Projects office is gearing up for another year of exciting JRFH/HFH events and sessions in historic Philadelphia, PA. Here are some of the sessions you can expect to see April 2-4, 2003 at the convention.

### Jump Rope and Hoops for Heart for Future School Coordinators

Wednesday, April 2, 2003 – 10:45 am - 12:00 pm

Each year our colleges and universities are graduating physical educators who are potentially new Jump and Hoops for Heart Coordinators. These new physical educators will be stepping into positions that may already have an event or into a school that could potentially have an event. The Illinois JRFH Task Force has developed a program to bring information to potential coordinators during their student teaching experience. This session will focus on that program and how it is impacting the JRFH and HFH programs in the state of Illinois.

*Speaker: William L. Sanders, Northern IL University,  
DeKalb, IL*

### Jump Start Your PE Program

Wednesday, April 2, 2003 – 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

This workshop will give teachers of all levels insight to basic jump rope skills that will excite students to pick up a rope and jump. Attendees will receive instruction in jump rope skills, basic to advanced. Single rope, partner tricks, long rope and double dutch will be explored. The East Fallowfield Jazzy Jumpers demonstration team will be on hand to provide expert assistance.

*Speaker: Joanie L. Lepage, East Fallowfield Elementary  
School, Honey Brook, PA*

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## At the Heart of the Matter



### The Pulse Newsletter

Volume 3, Number 4

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# The AHA Research Corner

## New Data on Obesity In Kids Sheds Light On a Growing Problem

12/31/2002



### Annual Statistics Update Highlights Risk Factors In Children

**D**ALLAS, Dec. 31 – An estimated 8.8 million children and adolescents ages 6-19 are considered overweight or obese, according to data from the National Center for Health Statistics reported in the American Heart Association's Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics - 2003 Update, an annual report released today.

The report highlights alarming new data on overweight and obesity in youth and features updated statistics on high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, physical inactivity and smoking in children and adolescents.

The information may help dispel one of the more common myths of heart disease—that it is an “old person’s” disease. “When it comes to cardiovascular disease, myths that promote complacency, promote disease,” says David Goff, M.D., Ph.D., chair of the American Heart Association’s statistics committee.

Based on data from the 1999-2000 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, the prevalence of overweight in children ages 6-11 increased from 4.2 percent to 15.3 percent compared with data from 1963-65. The prevalence in adolescents ages 12-19 increased from 4.6 percent to 15.5 percent in the same period.

Nationally, among adults, the estimated annual cost attributable to obesity-related diseases is about \$100 billion, the association reports. Among children and adolescents, annual hospital costs related to obesity were \$127 million during 1997-1999. In turn, as a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease (CVD), obesity affects the cost of treating CVD. Among American adults in 1996, \$31 billion of treatment costs for CVD was related to overweight and obesity.

“An alarming increase in unattended risk factors in the younger generations will continue to fuel the cardiovascular epidemic for years to come,” says Robert O. Bonow, M.D., president of the American Heart Association. “In addition, the update continues to show high rates of heart attack and

stroke and cardiovascular mortality. We still have important work to do in prevention, treatment, and improved outcomes for those currently afflicted by these conditions.”

### The Metabolic Syndrome

In addition to the added focus on CVD in youth, the report includes a new section on the metabolic syndrome. People with the metabolic syndrome are at increased risk for developing diabetes and CVD, as well as increased death from CVD and all causes.

Also known as “syndrome X,” the metabolic syndrome is becoming more prevalent among American adults. The condition is defined as three or more of the following abnormalities:

- Waist circumference greater than 40 inches in men and 35 inches in women
- Blood triglyceride level of 150 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL) or higher
- High-density lipoprotein (HDL) level less than 40 mg/dL in men and 50 mg/dL in women
- Blood pressure of 130/85 millimeters of mercury (mm Hg) or higher
- Fasting glucose level of 110 mg/dL or higher

Using population numbers from the 2000 census, an estimated 47 million U.S. residents have the metabolic syndrome. This translates to an age-adjusted prevalence of 23.7 percent of Americans.

### Up In Smoke

While cigarette smoking among American adults has declined by more than 40 percent since 1965, it seems more young people are choosing to light up.

During 1988-1996, the number of adolescents 12-17 years old who tried their first cigarette increased by 30 percent, and the number who began smoking daily increased by 50 percent. Among students in grades 9 - 12 in 2001, 38.5 percent of males and 29.5 percent of females reported current tobacco use.



About 80 percent of people who use tobacco begin before age 18, most commonly between ages 14 and 15. If trends continue, about 5 million of these people will eventually die from a disease attributable to smoking.

The good news is that choosing to quit can dramatically reduce a person's risk of heart disease and death. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one year after quitting, the risk of heart disease is cut in half, and within 15 years, the relative risk of dying from heart disease for an ex-smoker approaches that of a lifetime nonsmoker.

### Get a Move On

The risk for heart disease is 1.5 to 2.4 times higher for people who are inactive compared with those who are physically active on a regular basis. This increase in risk is comparable to that observed for high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure or cigarette smoking.

The association reports that just over half (51.7 percent) of high school students were enrolled in physical education classes in 2001. However, only a third (32.2 percent) attended classes daily.

Physical inactivity is more prevalent among women than men, among blacks and Hispanics than whites, among older than younger adults and among the less affluent than the more affluent. The updated data shows that by the age of 16 or 17, 56 percent of black girls and 31 percent of white girls report no habitual physical activity in their leisure time.

“The message from these statistics is that our students may be missing out on one of the best means to stop heart disease,” says Bonow. “Our goal is to change that.” ♥

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American Heart Association World Wide Web Site  
<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3007337>

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### Higher Education: Your Part in Jump and Hoops Events

Thursday, April 3, 2003 – 10:15 am - 12:15 pm

This session will include hands-on techniques that can be used to create a district or citywide JRFH or HFH event. Participants will jump, run and play while learning how everyone from elementary through college aged students can be involved with these two amazing community service based events. Learn how a district or city wide event can benefit your students.

*Speakers: Patty Hartenbower and Nannette Wolford, Missouri Western State College, St. Joseph, MO*

### JRFH/HFH: Perspectives From An AHA Researcher

Thursday, April 3, 2003 – 2:45 pm - 4:00 pm

The Jump Rope for Heart and Hoops for Heart programs provide grants and research funds to doctors in the areas of cardiovascular medicine. This session will feature Dr. Steven Houser, Professor of Physiology, Temple University School of Medicine. Dr. Houser is currently the Chair of the Pennsylvania-Delaware Affiliate Research Committee and is a member of the National AHA Research Committee. Come learn how your JRFH or HFH event has led to amazing discoveries and innovative life saving research.

*Speaker: Dr. Steven Houser, Temple University*

If you are planning to attend the 2003 AAHPERD Convention please show your support for the Joint Projects by attending our sessions, watching the JRFH demonstration teams that will perform several times each day in the exhibition area, and by visiting the AHA booth on the exhibit floor. I look forward to seeing many of you in Philadelphia! ♥

— S. Schoenberg

## Stories from the Heart

### Building Bricks in the Fight Against Heart Disease and Stroke



Submitted by: N. Kathryn Clark,  
Nebraska Communications Director,  
AHA Heartland Affiliate



Jenny Nixon (Youth Marketing Specialist for the American Heart Association), Kaitlyn Lessman (Top fund-raiser—\$230), and teacher Kelly Zezulak



Front Row: Gabby Waesch, Sabrina Fisher,  
Kaitlyn Lessman, Charles Koester

Back Row: Kim West, Jenny Nixon (Youth Marketing Specialist for the American Heart Association),  
teacher Kelly Zezulak

#### From a Kiewit Student:

"Dear Ms. Z,  
Hoops for Heart was a great experience. Kids that had no way to give to the community did it this way. Some kids only gave \$2 to reach our goal but it was from their own money. From the beginning it sounded fun. It was a way for me to raise money for the American Heart Association and meet my neighbors. Since I had heart surgery last year I thought it would be nice to help kids who are going through the same thing. We had a big party and got to play basketball and eat all kinds of food. We raised over \$8,000 and made a new state goal to try and beat next year."

When Kelly Zezulak asked Kiewit Middle School students in Omaha, Nebraska to participate in the American Heart Association's Hoops for Heart program last fall, she wanted to make sure the students understood that this was not just another fund-raiser for an obscure cause. So she shared her personal story.

"My Dad was 47 when he died of a heart attack after he helped me start my car on a really cold March day," says the first-year physical education instructor at Kiewit. "My mom (age 46) died 16 months later from heart problems." Then she had six Kiewit students share their personal battles with heart disease with their classmates.

Zezulak also hauled in 1,000 paper bricks and passed them out to students during a moment of silence. The students wrote on the bricks the names of the people—those who had died or survived cardiovascular disease—for whom they were jumping. When the bricks were lined up, they covered an entire school wall.

"I wanted this to be a teachable moment," she comments. "I know how difficult it is to ask for money. I wanted the students to understand that cardiovascular disease is something that can strike anyone—even their classmates." The result? More than 140 Kiewit students raised more than \$8,000 for the American Heart Association, surpassing the previous year's total by \$1,500 and Zezulak's original goal by \$2,000.

And Zezulak? She kept the bricks to which students had signed the names of her parents, Joe and Mary Zezulak. ♥

## Survivor Stories

### Bobbi Lynn Cason



By: Aimee Staten, The Eastern Arizona Courier

Tears filled his eyes and he paused to regain his composure as he told about his 16 year-old daughter's journey to the edge of the abyss and back.

August 7, 2002 Bob Cason received a phone call from his ex-wife, Laurie, at 10:30 p.m. saying she'd taken Bobbi Lynn to the emergency room at Thunderbird Samaritan in Glendale. "They thought she'd had a massive heart attack," Cason said.

Earlier that day, Bobbi Lynn's mother had taken her to an urgent care facility when she complained of shortness of breath and chest pains, but her symptoms were dismissed as a touch of pleurisy and she was sent home. By 9:00 p.m. that evening she was suffering heart failure.

That was when the first inexplicable event in a long list of such events occurred. She walked into the emergency room in the throes of massive heart failure. "The doctors could not understand how she was able to walk in on her own," Cason said. Within 10 minutes of her arrival, she flat-lined and paddles were used to revive her heart.

"I just flew there," Cason said. He arrived in Glendale by 12:30 p.m. after one of the seemingly longest trips of his life. When he ran through the emergency room doors, medical staff were preparing Bobbi Lynn for surgery. The first surgery lasted 14.5 hours. During that time, Cason said there was no good news to be found.

When his daughter's chest was opened, Cason said Dr. Florendo expected to find a ruptured aorta. What he found, instead, was what appeared to be the shriveled heart of an unhealthy 80-year-old man. The right side of the girl's heart was not functioning at all, and the left side was functioning at 10 percent.

Her heart stopped beating and she had to be resuscitated three times during her surgery. Bobbi Lynn was quickly put on life support, then taken off so that an Abiomed, which acts as an external artificial heart, could be attached. The device is a clear contraption fitted with two long tubes. It is fixed to the side of the patient's bed and the tubes are attached to the heart. The tubes performed for Bobbi Lynn what her heart was unable to do, which was pump oxygenated blood back into her system.

After the Abiomed, which is also called a bridge to recovery, was attached, Bobbi Lynn's parents faced other difficulties. Because their daughter had been

without oxygen several times during surgery, there was a possibility of brain damage. And, "Best case scenario was, she was going to need a heart transplant," her father said.

The problem was that no one knew if Bobbi Lynn was eligible for a new heart. "People don't understand that you can't just have a bad heart and get a transplant," Cason said.

Diabetics and people with viral infections or brain damage are not usually eligible for heart transplants.

It was 6:00 p.m., August 8, 2002, and the prognosis was still shaky. Bobbi Lynn was in a coma-like state and hadn't responded to neurological tests beyond a very slow reaction to light with her eyes, when Cason leaned over his daughter's bed and kissed her on the forehead. "I thought I was imagining it, but it seemed like she kind of leaned into my kiss," Cason said. I asked her if she knew how much I loved her. And she nodded ever so slightly."

Cason said he was almost afraid to hope. "I wondered if it actually happened or if it was my imagination because I wanted it to happen so badly." So he asked her again. She nodded. Then he asked her if she was playing a joke on him, and she shook her head. "I was holding her right hand and I asked her if she could feel me holding her hand. She shook her head," he said. So he tried the left hand and received a positive response from his daughter when he repeated the question. "I said, 'I'll be right back.'"

He ran into the hallway and told the first available nurse what he'd seen and said. She looked carefully at the man and said he should "just calm down." Then she followed him back into the room. "You would not believe how quickly the room filled up with people," Cason said, eyes glowing as he remembered. Doctors began once again to perform neurological tests. "There were more wires running out of her than you have in your car," Cason said. "She had never looked more beautiful." Bobbi Lynn slowly but surely regained feeling on both sides of her body.

Dr. Jack Copeland, who Cason said is known as the best in his field of cardio thoracic surgery, was contacted in France where he was teaching classes and performing heart transplants, "He said to transport her to the University of Arizona Medical Center. He would be there on Saturday," Cason said. "He flew from France to take care of my baby."

Bobbi Lynn was flown to Tucson and doctors began the workups to prepare the 16-year-old for the transplant, but there was still some uncertainty that Bobbi Lynn would last long enough to make it to surgery.

Then on Tuesday, the situation went from celebratory to frightening once again for Cason. The

*Continued on back cover...*

# CONGRATULATIONS to the Outstanding JRFH and HFH Coordinators of the Year



**Ella Schultheis** (JRFH) teaches physical education at French Road Elementary School in Rochester, New York. French Road has run a Jump Rope for Heart event for over 20 years but in the past four years Ella's program has been the number one school in the nation. Last year the school raised over \$78,600, adding to a total of \$568,226 since 1983.

Ella and her co-coordinators have made French Road a model school program where students learn and experience the benefits of physical exercise through the development of life skills and learn about commitment and dedication to a worthy cause, like JRFH.



**Gary J. Wilson** (JRFH) is an elementary physical education teacher at Anniston Avenue Elementary in the Gulfport Mississippi School District. Gary strives for excellence in his teaching and has been known to go above and beyond in incorporating Jump Rope for Heart (JRFH) into his curriculum. This past year Gary challenged his students by promising to kiss a pig if they met their JRFH goal and **THEY DID!**

Gary's passion for Jump Rope for Heart does not end with his own school. As the Mississippi AHPERD State JRFH coordinator, he spends countless hours working with new coordinators to help make their programs successful as well.



**Brook Gibbons** (HFH) has set the Hoops for Heart standard for the state of Alabama. Under her guidance, Mountain Brook Jr. High School in Birmingham, Alabama has been the top money raiser in Alabama since the inception of the HFH program.

Brook educates her students about the mission of the American Heart Association (AHA) and how it impacts their lives. As a result of this understanding, the Mountain Brook program has increased participation from one-third of its students collecting donations to 100% of its students collecting donations.

**Ella, Gary, and Brook will be honored at the 2003 AAHPERD Convention.**

**Recipients will receive their awards on Thursday, April 3, 2003, at the Alliance Awards Ceremony.**

**Congratulations and thank you for your hard work!**



# JUMP ACROSS THE NATION

## Iowa JRFH State Leaders Retire

By: Jan Grenko Lehman, Co-chair Iowa JRFH Task Force

**A**fter 35 years and 36 years of teaching respectively, Hal Garwood and Jim Patterson, co-chairs of the Iowa Jump Rope for Heart Task Force from 1996-2002 retired from teaching. They were both true leaders for physical education and promoting a healthy active lifestyle for students. For the last 13 years, they were co-directors of the Iowa Skippers demo team. This group of over 60 jumpers performed at high school and college half times, over 40 school assemblies around the state per year, the Iowa Girl's High School State Basketball tournament, parades, state conventions, and a number of community events.

Because of Hal and Jim's hard work and dedication to Jump Rope for Heart, the state of Iowa has been the leading state in the Heartland Affiliate for the past two years. Iowa has raised over one million dollars for the American Heart Association in the past two years. This is due largely in part to the efforts of Hal and Jim and their strong belief in positive events such as Jump Rope for Heart. Both Hal and Jim have been state money leaders nine times!

They have been a driving force in keeping Jump Rope for Heart about students while still understanding the importance of the American Heart Association's fight against heart disease and stroke. Both have been a familiar face at state, district, and national conventions and will be missed. It is not possible to replace two individuals who have been a friend, mentor, teacher and state leader. They are a true credit to the state of Iowa and the teaching profession. Thank you Hal and Jim. ♥

## In Loving Memory of Ronald Blue

By: Joy Brindley, Madison, AL

Ronald Blue came to West Madison Elementary School in 1996. His first grade teacher immediately came to me with the following information: Ronald was diagnosed with an aneurysm near his heart and would be on medication his entire life. He could not participate in physical education or any other activity that would put stress on his heart.

As a physical educator I could not imagine any child benefiting from no activity, so I began to research Ronald's condition. Within a few days, I had several conversations with his mother and his doctor. We all knew that as a first grader Ronald should be able to "play" with the other children, but his heart could not tolerate strenuous exercise. Ronald's mother and doctor both thought that he should be allowed to live like a typical child and I promised to monitor his activity very closely.

During the seven years that Ronald was a student at West Madison Elementary School, he grew to be a vibrant, well-mannered teenager who had a never-ending smile, showed extreme enthusiasm for life,

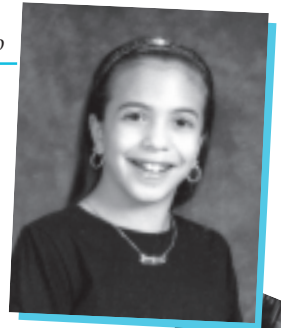
was loved by everyone, and became a very positive roll model for other students. Physically, Ronald's endurance improved gradually and his body became stronger. Ronald loved living!

In the fall semester 2000, Ronald was in the fifth grade when he was elected to be the manager of our Jump Rope For Heart Demonstration Team. Everyone on our team voted for Ronald after I read his essay "If I Get Selected As Your Team Manager". Ronald's essay touched the hearts of the children on the team. We all knew that he needed to be our manager. That year, we honored Ronald with our school's Jump Rope For Heart event. This year, we will dedicate our Jump Rope For Heart event to the memory of Ronald Blue who died December 26, 2002 at thirteen years old.

I thank God for the fond memories that we will always have of him at West Madison Elementary School and the dedication that Ronald had for our Jump Rope For Heart Demonstration Team. ♥

# Perspectives of a Parent

Jovana DiPrisco



By: Jeanine DiPrisco

Submitted by: Amy King, AHA Youth Market VP,  
Heritage Affiliate

*This letter was written in response to a thank you letter sent to the top student fundraiser.*

January 8, 2003

Dear Ms. King,

*Jovana one month after her first surgery.*



I was very touched by the letter you sent my daughter, Jovana. This year was important to her and she made sure she did her best. If you don't mind, I would like to explain to you why this year was very important to the whole family.

My daughter was born with a congenital heart condition. Her pediatric cardiologist told me "to treat her like a normal child". I have never forgotten those words. She had her first open heart surgery at the age of four. I knew that one day she would have another one. Because my daughter's condition was not a textbook one, the surgeon decided to wait until the proper time when correct surgery was available for her.

My daughter took dance classes from the age of three. She would sometimes get out of breath but she knew how much she could take. Exercise is very important. It makes your heart stronger.

The 2002 Jump Rope for Heart was Jovana's third. Years before she would jump with pride until she passed out. She could not wait to do it this year because she knew she was "fixed", and she could not pass out. Jovana had her second and hopefully final open heart surgery on July 22, 2002. Her surgeon combined two different surgeries to fix her complicated problem. Because of research, he was able to find a way to fix her.

Ms. King, my daughter is a beautiful, healthy twelve year old. She was able to see her life fulfilled to date because of people like you and the American Heart Association. So, I would like to thank you and the millions of people who donate their time and money to such a worthwhile cause.

May God Bless You,  
Jeanine DiPrisco

*Jovana receiving an award at the NYC Tap Festival.*



*...Continued from page 4*

Abiomed had been in Bobbi Lynn's chest for almost a week and the device had originally been designed to reside in the chest of a patient only a few days.

Fluid and blood clots had built up around her heart since her surgery and would need to be removed if she were to live. "Copeland told me not to worry," Cason said. The doctor planned to re-enter the girl's chest cavity, suction out the blood clots and fluid and possibly replace the Abiomed with a more permanent "bridge to recovery" device called an Authoritec. After surgery, however, the Abiomed was reattached to the heart.

On Thursday, her heart began pumping blood on its own. "It was astonishing," Cason said. "Her heart came back after it had been basically dead for one week." Doctors, nurses, friends and family watched Bobbi Lynn's unflagging faith and recovery in amazement.

"Her spirit was so strong. Never once did she say, 'Why me?'" Cason said.

In fact, Bobbi Lynn attributed her recovery to God and the prayers that were offered for her recovery. Cason's family had the constant companionship of clergyman who offered prayers and support throughout the entire ordeal.

There were also scores of Bobbi Lynn's friends and fellow church members from the Community Grace Baptist Church in Glendale camped out in the halls and in the hospital's chapel praying and offering encouragement and assistance to the family. "None of them were able to see her at any time, but they stayed and prayed wherever they were," he said. Bobbi Lynn's picture is one of only two displayed on Thunderbird Samaritan Hospital's Wall of Fame. ♥

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