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## Write for us!

Bring national attention to your school by contributing to *The Pulse*! Highlight the achievements of your school's Jump Rope For Heart or Hoops For Heart event in the Best Practices Section, tell us what's happening locally in the State Spotlight or submit a lesson plan or a heartwarming feature article.

The next deadline for submissions is September 16, 2013.

Email or fax articles to [Imunley@aahperd.org](mailto:Imunley@aahperd.org) or 703.476.9527.

## Contribute today!

## Apply for the 2014 AAHPERD Jump Rope For Heart & Hoops For Heart Grant and Recognition Awards!

### 2014 AAHPERD Jump Rope For Heart & Hoops For Heart Grant

Every year AAHPERD awards ten grants, at a \$2,500 value each, to physical education teachers who demonstrate passion, creativity, and dedication to the Jump Rope For Heart and Hoops For Heart programs. The AAHPERD Jump Rope For Heart and Hoops For Heart Grant is open to all physical educators who have held a Jump or Hoops event during the 2012–2013 school year. Application deadline is October 18, 2013.

### 2013 AAHPERD Jump Rope For Heart & Hoops For Heart Recognition Awards

Are you an AAHPERD member who has held a Jump Rope For Heart or Hoops For Heart event each year for three years or more? If so, you may be eligible to apply for the 2014 AAHPERD Jump Rope For Heart & Hoops For Heart Recognition Awards! Application deadline is October 18, 2013.

### Apply Today!

[Click here for the Grant Application](#)

[Click here for the Recognition Award Application](#)



# Survivor Story

## Erica Mills

We all wonder whether the money we raise for charities goes towards anything useful. Well, I am here to tell you that the money donated to the American Heart Association goes to many things that help save people like me. I am 21 years old and have survived and thrived with a congenital heart defect despite many having thought that I wouldn't make it past the sidelines. Without much family history of heart problems, my parents were shocked when they were told that I had Tetralogy of Fallot at birth. Although there is a very low survival rate for this condition, my parents believed in me and were with me every step of the way.

After 10 months of struggling with minor ailments after birth, I finally got the open-heart surgery that saved my life. The University of Kentucky Hospital repaired the four major defects that were putting me in danger of losing my life. One year later I was diagnosed with another rare disease called Kawasaki Disease. While there isn't much known about this disease, it is known to cause a great deal of strain on the cardiovascular system. Unfortunately, I rejected the regular treatments and spent a month in the hospital combating the disease. While this may seem to have been a major string of unfortunate events, my parents did not allow me to sit on the sidelines.

I have dedicated my life to staying healthy, no matter how many people tell me I can or can't do something. Many individuals with the same defect have been through numerous surgeries by my age and are extremely unhealthy. Instead of living in this manner, I have combated the negatives of the defect by making my heart stronger. From being a high school state champion pole-vaulter to participating in an Olympic distance triathlon nine months after a minor heart surgery, I have proven that through dedication anyone can overcome obstacles. Individuals can combat the illnesses that attack them by simply living a healthy lifestyle.

Not only has the American Heart Association contributed to my health by providing healthy lifestyle guidelines, the organization has also dedicated much of its efforts to cardiovascular research. This research allowed doctors to find my completely blocked pulmonary artery due to scar tissue and fix the problem without having to undergo another open-heart surgery in 2010. Thanks to new research, parents can know all about health problems before a baby is born and there will be technology available to help in the healing process. This is why I have spent my time and effort raising awareness and funds for the American Heart Association. By supporting AAHPERD and American Heart Association's partnership, teachers are promoting heart-healthy living and helping people like me survive.

### About Erica Mills

Erica Mills is a recent graduate from DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana. She was born and raised in the small town of Danville, Kentucky. At birth, Erica was diagnosed with Tetralogy of Fallot, a serious heart defect that causes four different developmental problems within the heart. Open-heart surgery was inevitable but, due to continued illnesses, Erica was 11 months old before she could have the procedure. About one year later, Erica contracted Kawasaki disease, an autoimmune disease in which the medium-sized blood vessels throughout the body become inflamed. Kawasaki disease affects many organ systems and can easily cause major problems in the circulatory system.

Erica did not allow these health conditions to stand in her way while growing up. She amazed doctors and coaches alike with the things that she was able to accomplish. Erica won the indoor and outdoor pole-vaulting state championships in high school, participated in a triathlon a year after a second heart surgery, and recently ran a half marathon. Although she has little use of her left lung, Erica is performing at levels above the average non-cardiology patients of her age. While continuing to stay active, Erica has proven time and time again that she is not going to let her defect stand in the way of her success. She is thankful each and every day for the science and technology—supported by the American Heart Association and AAHPERD—that have allowed her to live the way she does today. In May of 2013, Erica earned degrees in both Kinesiology and Communication and will pursue a career as a pediatric physical therapist. With these degrees she hopes to help children just like her succeed in living a healthy lifestyle.



*Erica Mills with AAHPERD CEO E. Paul Roetert as she tells her survivor story at the AAHPERD General Session during the National Convention & Expo in Charlotte, NC.*

## Our Hearts Beat for the American Heart Association: Active Passion at the Watson Institute



*Joshua with his Mom and Dad*



*Joshua participating at a JRFH event*

*Submitted by: Tyler Cathcart, Sewickley, Pennsylvania  
The Education Center at The Watson Institute*

# Inspirational Heart Hero

Four years ago, my passion for physical education and compassion for others led me to begin working with the special needs population. The Education Center at The Watson Institute located in Sewickley, PA, is an approved private school that serves children with a multitude of disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 years old. Even though these children are challenged each and every day with their own endeavors, the lessons that are learned from actively participating in the American Heart Association fundraisers continue to encourage healthier lifestyles.

The Education Center at The Watson Institute has been participating in both Jump Rope for Heart and Hoops for Heart for the past decade. It has been an honor to be the coordinator/teacher beginning in the spring of 2008. Our dedicated students and families have raised over \$10,000 for the American Heart Association since they began participating in the 1999-2000 school year. Each year monetary support has increased, but more importantly we have had more and more students participating and choosing to raise funds. I continue to incorporate both JRFH and HFH in my lesson plans each year because the students genuinely look forward to and enjoy the three-week unit. More recently, I have included the inspiring stories that are told through the American Heart Association DVDs. This has added to the students' engagement as they listen to catchy music and hear the encouraging words from peers their age. However, as a school and community of teachers, students, and families, we have been inspired by our own Heart Hero. Our hero was a student here at Watson named Joshua Gallagher.

Joshua was a student born with hypoplastic left heart syndrome. He underwent a heart transplant at 3 months of age and had numerous heart surgeries in the years to follow. Despite all of this, Joshua was a student who celebrated life and the miracle of his new heart. Joshua attended the Watson Institute from 2002 until his passing in 2010 and every year we would celebrate not only his birthday, but the day he received his heart transplant. He called this day his "heart's birthday" and would make sure everyone in the school knew of this blessing.

Joshua was never one to miss a party or special activity at school. Even when he was extremely sick and it was difficult for him to find the energy to get out of bed, he would make an effort to come into school for these events. This held true for our annual Jump Rope for Heart and Hoops for Heart fundraiser. For many years, Joshua was our Heart Ambassador for the event. He raised money, participated in JRFH, and inspired many others to do the same. Through these activities and many others, The Education Center at The Watson Institute was a place where Joshua felt accepted and confident. Although Joshua is no longer with us, he is still an inspiration as we continue to jump and shoot in his honor.

# Best Practices

## “Reach Out” and Succeed!

When Jump Rope for Heart first came to Collegium Charter School, no one could have imagined it would have grown into a school-wide community service and learning event that raised over \$30,000 this year for the American Heart Association! We have never actually set a goal to raise a certain amount of money, but have always managed a significant total. The focus with students is heart health and community service. But the relationships with our staff are what has had the most impact on the program. Administrators, teachers, assistants, secretaries, IT, and maintenance all take a pie in the face for this great cause. Enthusiasm can be contagious. We built it slowly and a little more each year as our program has blossomed.

*Submitted by: Colleen McNamara, Collegium Charter School  
2013 AAHPERD JRFH & HFH Grant Recipient*

### Tips for a Successful School-wide Event:

- The JRFH Committee, made up of teaching staff, helps with announcements, posters, newsletters, flyers.
- Administration allowing this to be a school-wide event makes the impact on the students significant. Everyone participates in activity stations on JRFH day.
- Teachers, administrators, and staff volunteer to get “pied” by the classes that raise the most money!
- It’s wear red day. Uniform exceptions are allowed for JRFH!

## JRFH Advocacy

Not only is JRFH a wonderful experience for our K-3 school community, it has become an incredible culminating event for a number of skills and concepts taught in our PE curriculum. Jump Rope for Heart is a great way to mesh fitness concepts, heart health, and jumping and landing skills with caring for others, cooperation, and teamwork. Through JRFH students make connections as they begin to understand the importance of staying physically active. Each year students build on their knowledge through a variety of heart healthy activities. These activities are no longer clumped together into a ‘JRFH Unit’ that takes place right before our event. Instead, lessons have been expanded and enriched to span the course of the school year. Attending workshops that focus on fitness and nutrition has awakened me to the possibilities of incorporating these concepts while teaching throughout the school year. In my schools, JRFH takes place in April or May. This gives me nearly the entire school year to intertwine heart health throughout my curriculum.

*Submitted by: Danielle McGrath  
2013 JRFH Grant Recipient  
Marblehead, MA*



# The Meaning of Names

by Kris Fritz, WI JRFH Grant winner 2013

Ten individuals received AAHPERD JRFH/HFH grants in Charlotte in April 2013. The American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance is proud of its 30+ year partnership with the American Heart Association and has attempted to 'give back' to those individuals who have demonstrated dedicated service and passion for JRFH/HFH across our nation by awarding these grants through Joint Projects and in partnership with U.S. Games. Read on to discover who these individuals are and a short analysis of the meaning of their names.

These 10 names represent separate individuals from across the country. Through passionate efforts devoted to the JUMP & HOOPS events they have conducted over the years, they are all teachers who are "united in moving" and are "driving their future" and the future of so many others. Their names may be different, but in meaning, they bring joint qualities that are most meaningful to ensuring the success of the JRFH/HFH agenda.

Involvement with AAHPERD and American Heart Association requires a sense of adventure, willingness to share knowledge and experience, and a desire to lead and connect with the community. Developing and conducting events demands the ability to analyze, dynamic energy, creativity, and imagination.

Likewise, it is necessary to demonstrate a desire to work together and inspire others in order to be successful in these endeavors. Therefore, what is in a name has been immensely important for all those who have benefited from this year's grant winners' personal involvement in JRFH/HFH programs.

What is in the 'meaning' of your name? You, too, can connect to AAHPERD/American Heart Association and begin to 'drive your future' and that of others. Remember, before we can walk and run, we must crawl. Start small and get involved to help change your life and the lives of those around you.

- Tyler:** desire for adventure, capable, practical
- Kris:** desire to serve, gives others knowledge and experience
- Marlys:** desire to use abilities in leadership, focus on the whole
- Tommy:** desire to connect to the community, needs to work with others
- Shannon:** desire to understand and analyze, love of learning
- Cecil:** desire for adventure, energetic, dynamic
- Danielle:** desire to work with others, competent, practical
- Colleen:** desire to learn and understand, creative, expressive
- Terri:** adventurous, enjoys learning and analyzing
- Renee:** desire to work together, imaginative, inspires others



*A young participant who got a bit tired, but still put all of his "heart" into it and crawled to the finish line.*

## Special Thanks!

Special thanks are extended to AAHPERD Joint Projects Manager, Allison Davis and U.S. Games for their involvement in this Grant Program.

**Allison:** desire to understand and analyze, initiates events through leadership.

## Get Involved!

Have you registered to hold an event to showcase the importance of physical activity in the upcoming 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](http://www.heart.org/jump) or [www.heart.org/hoops](http://www.heart.org/hoops) to build a lasting tradition in your school.

## Resources

### AAHPERD:

[www.aahperd.org/jump](http://www.aahperd.org/jump)  
[www.aahperd.org/hoops](http://www.aahperd.org/hoops)

### Facebook:

JRFH/HFH Facebook Page

### American Heart Association:

[www.heart.org/jump](http://www.heart.org/jump)  
[www.heart.org/hoops](http://www.heart.org/hoops)  
[www.yourethecure.org](http://www.yourethecure.org)

## FREE AAHPERD Membership!

Your Jump Rope For Heart or Hoops For Heart event gives future generations the keys they need to stay heart healthy for life. When your school holds a Jump Rope For Heart or Hoops For Heart event and raises over \$1,000 or more, you receive a FREE AAHPERD professional e-membership!

If you have held a JRFH or HFH event in the past school year and raised over \$1,000 or more:

- Simply download and complete the [e-membership application](#).
- Have your school principal sign it.
- Fax, email or mail it to AAHPERD to activate your FREE AAHPERD e-membership.

## Get Involved!



[www.aahperd.org/jump](http://www.aahperd.org/jump)



[www.aahperd.org/hoops](http://www.aahperd.org/hoops)



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



American Heart Association  
Learn and Live

[www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)