

Broomfield Academy students jump into heart-healthy lesson

Fundraiser aids Heart Association, teaches kids about their tickers

By [Sally Bridges](#) ([Contact](#))

Sunday, May 3, 2009

Photo Gallery

Jumping for Heart



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BROOMFIELD, Colo. — It looked like an ordinary day on the Broomfield Academy playground. Kids were jumping ropes, shooting baskets, running around and having fun -- things adults sometimes forget to do. The kind of things some people with heart disease are no longer able to do.

But Tuesday, it was play with a purpose. The students were busy jumping rope to raise money for the American Heart Association and learning about heart disease at the same time.

The lessons were not lost on even the youngest of jumpers, who still measure their ages in six-month increments.

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"It's better to have a heart pumping," said Gabrielle Bunch, 7½, while listening to her heart beat through a stethoscope.

She had already jumped 500 times and was getting ready to jump 400 more. How much money she would raise was a bit unclear, either \$25.50 or \$125 she guessed. The amount was contingent on her actual jump tally and her ability to collect pledges from friends and neighbors who promised their support.

So far, the charter school, with 86 students from pre-kindergarten through sixth grade, has collected nearly \$1,000 -- about half what it collected last year, the first time it participated in the Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser.

"We want everyone in the school to jump, regardless of whether they've raised money or not," teacher Dawn Essig said. "With the economy, we don't expect the students will raise as much money this year. The kids are having fun."

All the teachers at the school are required to do a project that gives back to the community, said Essig, who teaches fifth and sixth grades.

Some classes do book drives or food drives, but Essig thought students should do something that forced them to be active, learn from the activity and still give back to the community.

Aside from jumping rope and collecting donations, each class received age-appropriate heart education, she said. Students from Essig's classroom coordinated the project and set up stages along the playground for the other students to explore when they weren't jumping. Stages included stethoscopes and test tubes filled with fat.

The fatty test tubes, which depicted the amount of fat in everything from a Big Mac to an ice cream cone, intrigued even the youngest of jumpers.

"This is showing how much fat is in the food they eat," sixth-grader Trevor Willenbring said. "The Big Mac has the most and the bagel has the least. So now maybe they will try to avoid it."

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Jumping for Heart



Fourth grader Ryan Wagner jumps ropes with classmates during the Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser for the American Heart Association at the Broomfield Academy on Tuesday.

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Jump rope doubles Alexandria Beilfuss, front, jumps with fellow 2nd grader Gabrielle Bunch while 6th grader Thomas Mouchawar moves the jump rope during the Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser for the American Heart Association at the Broomfield Academy

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Laura Gahtan, 5th grader, tests her hula hoop skills at one of the exercise stations during the Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser for the American Heart Association at the Broomfield Academy.

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Zack Buller, right, 3rd grade, and P.E. teacher Julie Shelley look at a sample of fat content in different foods during the Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser for the American Heart Association.

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Sveha Varanasi, jumps rope during the Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser for the American Heart Association at the Broomfield Academy.

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Alexandria Beilfuss, 2nd grade, jumps rope during the Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser for the American Heart Association at the Broomfield Academy.

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Gabriele Bunch, right, 2nd grade, listens to her heart with a stethoscope while classmate Alexandria Beilfuss waits her turn during the Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser for the American Heart Association at the Broomfield Academy.

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Sveha Varanasi, 3rd grade, does the limbo under a jump rope during the Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser for the American Heart Association at the Broomfield Academy.

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Ryan Wagner, 4th grade, tries out a stethoscope during the Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser for the American Heart Association at the Broomfield Academy.

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Caitlin McFarlane, 3rd grade, gets some air while jumping rope during the Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser for the American Heart Association at the Broomfield Academy.

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