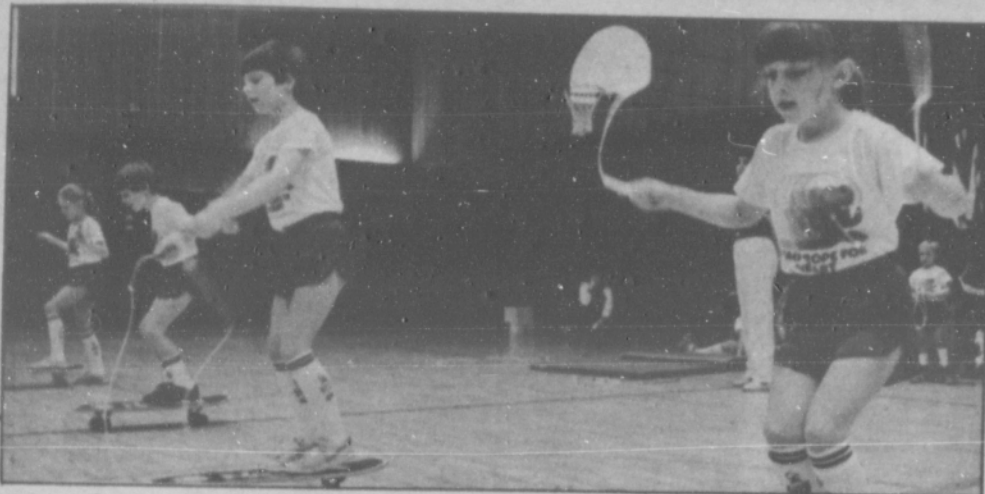




Staff photos by Scott Maguire

Rachel Polk (left), Phillip DeMars, Scott Hunter and Becky Polk performed as part of demonstration team at Dexter McCarty Middle School recently.

Several East County schools are involved in fundraisers for the American Heart Association.

Kids jump for heart group

by TONY KNEIDEK
of The Outlook staff

East County schools are jumping at the chance to raise money for the Oregon affiliate of the American Heart Association.

Several schools are involved in a national program aimed at raising funds for educational and research materials for the association, said Sabrina Meyers, special events coordinator for the Oregon affiliate.

Among the schools participating are Dexter McCarty Middle School, Margaret Scott School, Portland Adventist Elementary Academy and Sweetbriar School. In Clackamas County, Firwood Elementary School in Sandy and the Boring Upper Grade School in Boring also are participating.

The Boring School conducted its jump-a-thon recently and 28 kids participated, said Amy Bullard, who coordinated the event. "They raised approximately \$700," she said. "I haven't quite gotten it all in yet."

Cheryl Close, a physical education teacher at Sweetbriar School, also is a leader for one of the demonstration teams that go to the schools to show a variety of jumping techniques.

Close began jumping rope about seven years ago with Joan Sullivan-Morris, an instructor at Portland Community College Sylvania Campus. The group they jumped with performed during halftime at Portland Trail Blazers games.

The group then became affiliated with the American Heart Association to raise funds and promote cardiovascular fitness, Close said. She now leads a team of 20 kids who work about seven hours a week on their jump-roping technique. An additional 30 to 40 kids practice with Close two times a week.

To become a member of a demonstration team, the kids must pass compulsory and free-style tests and learn a variety of jumping tricks. They also must maintain their grades in school.

Second through sixth graders are on the demonstration team, Close said, and first through sixth graders practice regularly. Team members practice formally for three hours a week and spend an additional three to four hours jumping rope on their own. "They're dedicated," Close said. "They're real dedicated."

Last year, 106 schools in Oregon participated in the jump-a-thons, Meyers said. They raised \$162,000 for the American Heart Association. "It is quite successful," she said.

Participants solicit pledges for the number of minutes they spend jumping



Becky Polk quick jumps on a skateboard during recent demonstration.

rope. Teams consist of six kids who each take turns jumping for a total of three hours.

Students also receive prizes based on the amount of money they collect. Prizes range from a jumprope for \$10 in pledges to a jumprope, T-shirt, shorts and warm-up set for at least \$200.

"Jump rope for heart helps raise funds to support American Heart Association's battle against Oregon's number one killer — stroke and heart disease," the AMA notes. "Participants find the event to be an excellent way of combining a curriculum on cardiovascular fitness with fun, pride and school recognition."

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