



“Challenging People to Shape
a Better Future Now”

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Teen Athletes Need a Healthy Heart

They say that lightning doesn’t strike in the same place twice. Tell that to Heidi Stewart. Heidi is an 18 year old senior at Evergreen High School in Vancouver, WA. According to news reports, a few months ago she suffered a sudden cardiac arrest following her third period leadership class, where she was helping hang 1,950 pink paper hearts for Valentine’s Day—one for every student in her school.

Faculty and staff performed chest compressions and used the school’s automated external defibrillator, or AED, to shock Heidi’s heart back into normal rhythm. They saved her life and it wasn’t the first time that these high school heroes were called into action. This was the second cardiac arrest at Evergreen High in the past two years – they used an AED to save another student’s life in 2011.

Heidi was diagnosed with Arrhythmogenic Right Ventricular Dysplasia, or ARVD – a heart condition that may impact 1 in 5,000 people. It is one of several possible causes of sudden cardiac arrest in young people. While there is no cure for the condition, identifying it early may impact recommendations regarding participation in sports, and in some situations might lead to a recommendation to have an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator, or ICD, placed like a pacemaker in the chest to provide an electric shock to treat a future cardiac arrest if it happens.

ARVD can sometimes be diag-

PROVIDENCE

Dr. James Beckerman

nosed with a painless, noninvasive test that takes five minutes to perform. It’s called an electro cardiogram, or ECG. You may

all are causes of sudden death in young people.

A few years ago I met Teena Johnson, a tireless advocate for young people and heart health, and also the mother of Eddie Barnett, Jr. – a promising high school basketball player who died at Grant High School of hypertrophic cardiomyopathy in 2007. She asked

Play Smart Youth Screenings are just one way to save lives from sudden cardiac arrest

have had one in your doctor’s office. An ECG can provide information about the heart that isn’t provided from a typical doctor’s

me what we could do as health care providers to identify young people who may be at risk and direct them toward the medical

Learn more about our mission at
www.playsmartgetscreened.org
and visit us at:

www.facebook.com/playsmartgetscreened

visit or physical examination. We can use an ECG to diagnose ARVD and other heart conditions like Long QT Syndrome and Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy –

care they deserve.

We can be their advocates – by becoming activists ourselves. In 2012, the Providence Heart and Vascular Institute launched Play

Smart Youth Heart Screenings - a free heart screening program for young people ages 12 through 18. During the screening, we ask a heart health history, check a blood pressure, and perform an ECG. If our cardiologists believe that further testing is warranted, we also provide a free limited ultrasound of the heart to collect additional information. Since we began our screening program last year, we have identified multiple young people with concerns that required further follow-up. This year, we will be expanding our weekly clinic at Providence St. Vincent Medical Center and providing screenings on-site at schools throughout our communities.

On the day of Heidi’s cardiac arrest earlier this year, students hung 1,950 pink paper hearts at Evergreen High School - one for every student and one for every heart. We owe every single one of them the opportunity to feel safe - because we all have a stake in the game.

Learn more about our mission at www.playsmartgetscreened.org and visit us at: www.facebook.com/playsmartgetscreened to become an advocate for heart health in kids. We would love you to be a part of our team.

James Beckerman, M.D. is Cardiologist at Providence Heart and Vascular Institute, and the Medical Director of Play Smart Youth Screenings

Activist Icon Assata Shakur is No Terrorist

When the FBI announced that they were placing fugitive Assata Shakur (Joanne Chesimard) on the list of most wanted terrorists and that they were offering an additional \$1 million for her capture, it caught most of the world by complete surprise. Assata has been living quietly in exile in Cuba where she was given political asylum for 30 years. The former member of the Black Liberation Army escaped captivity after being tried and convicted—under controversial circumstances—in connection with the killing of a New Jersey State policeman. Several other allegations against her were dropped either through acquittals or mistrials.

Assata Shakur had been a member of the Black Panther Party, later joining the Black Liberation Army. Like many other Black activists in the late 1960s and early 1970s, she witnessed the vicious repression of the Black Freedom Movement—and other movements of the time—by agencies of the U.S. government, including through the use of the now notorious COINTELPRO (the FBI’s Counter Intelligence Program). COINTELPRO involved the infiltration and disruption of organizations that the FBI concluded were a threat to the U.S. elite. Disruption included rumor-mongering, provocation, the encouraging of splits, imprisonment and murder. The intensity of the repression of the Black Freedom Movement, in this case, led many activists to conclude that, at



TRANS AFRICA

Bill Fletcher Jr.

a minimum, self-defense was necessary. For others the conclusion

meaning of this word that we hear so regularly these days. A “terrorist” is someone who uses military methods/violence against civilians in order to advance a political objective. There is nothing in the activism of Assata Shakur that displays anything approaching terrorism. Additionally, since her exile, she has not been involved with any activities in the U.S.A. that could be construed as terrorist.

It appears that the main inspiration for this outrage is to derail any efforts at the normalization of relations between the U.S. and Cuba

was that a military arm of the Black Freedom Movement was needed.

Whether one agrees or disagrees with the conclusions arrived at by

So, what is this about? It appears that the main inspiration for this outrage is to derail any efforts at the normalization of relations between the U.S. and Cuba.

She was never a terrorist. Let us be clear about the meaning of this word that we hear so regularly these days

Assata Shakur, one thing is very important: she was never a terrorist. Let us be clear about the

Upon the reelection of President Obama, there have been rumors circulating that there might be

efforts to remove Cuba from the list of countries supporting terrorism. There were additional suggestions that there might be efforts towards normalization.

There are groups in the U.S.A. who oppose normalization of relations with Cuba and they will do anything that they can to disrupt such efforts. Whether those elements convinced the FBI to take this step is irrelevant. The fact is that this step complicates discussions about changing the terms of U.S./Cuban relations. Right-wing Cuban exiles as well as ultra-conservative elements in our political establishment have an interest in the status quo; most of this country is more interested in improvement in relations with Cuba.

For this reason, we need to understand the upping of the ante on Assata as not only a threat to her existence, a violation of Cuban and international law, but also a cynical move to disrupt efforts to end the Cold War in the Western Hemisphere.

Now is the time to demand that President Obama and Attorney General Holder reverse the decision of the FBI. Let’s end this ridiculous melodrama.

Bill Fletcher, Jr. is a Senior Scholar with the Institute for Policy Studies, the immediate past president of TransAfrica Forum and the author of “They’re Bankrupting Us” – And Twenty Other Myths about Unions. Follow him at www.billfletcherjr.com.