Camp iRock: Inspiring Arkansas one girl at a time

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Tamia Richardson, said "It’s good to show the girls what this [Camp iRock] is about." Richardson is one of 10 peer-mentors of Camp iRock this year. Mentors are former campers selected to guide and provide support to new campers. In order to be a mentor, former campers were required to attend all follow-up meetings, write an essay, keep a journal and lower or maintain their BMI. Campers learned about portion sizes along with what foods are good and bad

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Camp iRock was established in 2011 by the AMHC Board of Commissioners to combat the epidemic childhood/adolescent obesity in Arkansas and the disparities in this area among minority students. The camp was held June 3-9, 2012 at Ferncliff Camp in Little Rock. 39 girls representing all four Congressional districts participated this year. As during the first year, the 2012 Camp iRock featured workshops that catered to the mind, body and soul. Fitness and nutrition sessions were essential components of the camp. Camp iRock director, Phyllis Hodges, said her passion for the camp initiated from "such a major need for girls to be healthy." Hodges has served as Camp Director each year of the camp and is the Founder and CEO of the Carousel Fit 4 Life Wellness Center.

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Camp iRock!
The legacy of the camp lives on to inspire girls

By Brittany Reese, B.S.
Arkansas State University Graduate Student

"Who rocks? I rock! Who rocks, I rock! Who Rocks? I rock!" The sounds of young girls yelling camp chants with pride are still bouncing off the trees at Camp Ferncliff.

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for the body. Meg Green, dietician coordinator of ACH, planned camp meals. Camp health and safety would not exist without the volunteer nurse staff and Elise Dotson affectionately called Nurse Granny. The nurse staff and Nurse Granny took care of anyone not feeling well at the on-site infirmary.

Camp iRock ended with a phenomenal closing ceremony. Speakers were Commission Chairwoman, Willa Black Sanders, AMHC Executive Director Idonia L. Trotter, First Lady Ginger Beebe, and keynote speaker, Dominique Dawes, a four-time Olympic gold medalist. “Camp iRock is a great program where girls are taught the importance of overall health, including nutrition, physical fitness and positive self image,” said Beebe.

While Camp iRock is fairly new, it has a promising future in becoming one of Arkansas’s strongest traditions. Everyone involved with Camp iRock pulled out the potential of each camper, allowing them to see how much they truly “rocked” as an individual.

“The intention of Camp iRock is to implement intervention strategies to prevent childhood and adult obesity,” said Trotter. “Camp iRock is not just about the 40 girls selected to be a part of the program; it’s about the 40 families (80 mothers and fathers and countless family members) that will learn how to maintain healthy lifestyles,” she explained. “The commission is proud to be part of this lifestyle-change pilot project.”

To view the 2012 Camp iRock End of Camp Report developed by AMHC in partnership with the UAMS Department of Epidemiology, also a new partner this year, and Arkansas Children’s Hospital, click HERE.

L to R: Dominique Dawes, First Lady Ginger Beebe, AMHC Chairwoman, Willa Black Sanders, and AMHC Executive Director, Idonia Trotter

THANKS TO OUR 2012 CAMP IROCK SPONSORS AND DONORS

Arkansas Children’s Hospital
Girl Scouts-Diamonds of Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas
Arkansas Hunger Alliance
Arkansas National Guard
ARBEV
Avon
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Delta Dental
KARK CH 4-Z 42
On The Border
St. Edward Mercy Medical Hospital Fitness Center
-Fort Smith
USA Drug
I am in the glow of the recent Supreme Court decision upholding the Affordable Care Act. What will we think when we look back on this era in healthcare? Will we see this as a moment we vaunted forward or will we look back and lament our inaction and speak of missed opportunities? Arkansas is desperate for progress to address critical needs in all levels of healthcare. The Arkansas Minority Health Commission has the specific responsibility to work to improve the state of healthcare of minority Arkansans. But who is the minority? Recent debates has emphasized the most desperate and neglected minority is the patient.

Arkansas earns a failing grade in almost every measure of health or wellness imaginable. We now have the opportunity for improvement in almost any healthcare endeavor we choose to undertake. Arkansans are especially challenged with cardiovascular illness, the number one cause of death. High rates of obesity, hypertension, diabetes, poor nutrition, poverty and the lack of proximity of our citizens to centers of healthcare delivery contributes to the challenges. Lack of access now defines the rural American as a functional spectacle. The access to the same level of care in rural regions as in our urban areas should be a standard of care. We must focus resources to encourage physicians, and healthcare workers to locate in rural communities. For this to become reality we must tip the scales favoring those who need more. We have made the first possibility for a great success. We have joined the battle for a better healthcare system. History suggests there is a bold and better world for all or we can choose the more cowardly path such that we never even glimpse what we could achieve. Whatever the blemishes the Affordable Care Act may have, we have joined the battle for a better healthcare system. History suggests there is possibility for a great success. We have made the first step.

The Arkansas Minority Health Commission partnered with the Arkansas County Partners In Health for the Annual Grand Prairie Health Fair & Wellness Expo in Stuttgart at the Grand Prairie Center on Thursday, June 28th. As a presenting partner, the AMHC played a vital role in the planning and coordination of this event. Over 545 (adults and children) attended.

The event offered 25 free medical screenings by area medical professionals such as, glucose, BMI, Hemoglobin, HIV, and cholesterol. This expo received overwhelming support from the Stuttgart community and surrounding areas which resulted in more than 70 registered churches, 91 volunteers, 55 registered vendors, 61 exhibitor booths providing health education, screenings, demonstrations and community health services information. A total of 902 free screenings were accomplished.

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F. Roosevelt Gilliam III, MD, FACP, FACC, Jonesboro, AR

Dr. Gilliam currently works at the Cardiology Associates of Northeast Arkansas. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry/Biochemistry from the University of Georgia and his medical degree from Duke University. He is the St. Bernard’s Medical Center Medical Director of Electrophysiology and serves on the St. Bernard’s Medical Center Heart Care Committee.

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AMHC RECEIVES NORTON WILSON PARTNER LEADERSHIP AWARD

Executive Director Idonia L. Trotter accepts the Norton Wilson Partner Leadership Award from Sip Mouden, CEO of the Community Health Centers of Arkansas Inc. (CHCA). The award was announced at the June 21-22 CHCA Annual Conference held at the Embassy Suites Conference Center in Little Rock. “AMHC has demonstrated exemplary leadership among stakeholders, CHCA, and health center members in the commitment to and support of the CHCA mission to develop and protect the resources that ensure every Arkansan has equal access to affordable quality health care,” said Mouden. The award is named in honor of the late Norton Wilson, who served as the Executive Director of CHCA from 1984 to September 2000.

WINNERS OF SKATE PARTY TAKE DAY TRIP TO LITTLE ROCK

As part of the Arkansas Minority Health Commission’s overarching focus of nutrition and fitness, the Commission offers faith-based organizations the opportunity to win “fun-packs” to physical fitness activities as an incentive for having the highest attendance at our health fairs and/or public forums. The winner of the January 2012 Camden Quarterly Health Fair fun-pack was Zion Hill Baptist Church Christian Academy (ZHBCCA) – Pastor: Bishop Chester Thompson. Pictured are youth from ZHBCCA at the Arkansas Skatium in Little Rock on Friday, July 13th.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TROTTER RECEIVES WOMEN OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

AMHC Director, Idonia L. Trotter (far right) was among five women honored May 7th at the Fourth Annual Women of Excellence Awards held at the North Little Rock Wyndham Riverfront Hotel and sponsored by Sister Friends United Inc., a nonprofit group based in Little Rock. The award ceremony honors women in the community that have excelled in their respective fields and have served as an inspiration to many in the areas of religion, education, health/social service, media and business. The 2012 honorees include Pamela Smith - Media Award, Senator Joyce Elliott-Education Award, Elder Sheree’ Evans-Religion Award, LaShonda Wade-Business Award and Trotter - Health/Social Service Award.

MEET BRITTANY REESE AND JACKIE BONDS

AMHC is proud to welcome Ms. Brittany Reese as a Communications Intern this summer. Reese, author of our cover story, is a graduate assistant in the journalism department of Arkansas State University. She is also the secretary of the Arkansas State University student chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists. Reese has a bachelor’s of science degree in journalism with an emphasis on photojournalism from Arkansas State University. She has written for the ASU Herald for the past three years and had a feature article in the Spring issue of African American Perspectives.

AMHC also welcomes Jackie Bonds, a City of Little Rock Summer Intern. The City of Little Rock Summer Employment Program helps to train teens to learn life skills and workplace etiquette – then sends them to jobs across the city for the summer. While at AMHC, the 18-year-old Little Rock native has learned basic office skills such as Microsoft Office Word and Excel. The AMHC is also sending Bonds to a one-day receptionist training seminar. She is a graduate of Little Rock Central High and will attend the University of Central Arkansas this fall.

AMHC Executive Director, Idonia Trotter and Community Health Centers of Arkansas CEO, Sip Mouden

Jackie Bonds (left) and Brittany Reese (right)
ARKANSAS MINORITY HEALTH COMMISSION
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ARKANSAS COUNTY PARTNERS IN HEALTH, ARKANSAS COUNTY HEALTH UNIT, BAPTIST HEALTH MEDICAL CENTER - STUTTGART
PRESENTS A
PUBLIC FORUM
on the Affordable Care Act and Local Health Needs

STUTTGART, ARKANSAS

WHEN?
FRIDAY, JULY 27, 2012
FREE DINNER SERVED AT 5:30 PM
PUBLIC FORUM 6PM TO 8PM

WHERE?
GRAND PRAIRIE CENTER
2807 HWY 165 S
STUTTGART, AR 72160

ATTENDEES ARE ASKED TO PROVIDE THEIR VIEWS ON:
• Services needed in Arkansas County and surrounding counties
• Health Concerns
• Use of Existing Services
• Gaps in Services

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE ARKANSAS MINORITY HEALTH COMMISSION
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