

Daisy Bates Elementary in Little Rock, Arkansas Builds Jump Rope Team Project

This was the first time that the USA National Jump Rope Team has been in Little Rock. To date, no demonstration of elite competitive jump roping has ever been performed in Arkansas. This was an amazing opportunity for our school and our district as well as our community.

I would like to confirm both the background and details of our event. Two years ago, our P.E. teacher, Coach Courtney Cancienne, formed a jump rope team at our school through Jump Rope for Heart. Last year proved to be a great performance year as the Daisy Bates Jumpers traveled all over Arkansas providing demonstrations and speaking on the benefits of physical fitness through jump roping. Our elementary jumpers performed at UALR, an Arkansas Travelers game, the Arkansas P.E. Conference in Eureka Springs, numerous school engagements from Hot Springs to Pottsville, marched in the Little Rock Holiday Parade, and their highlight was performing a demonstration at the Leadership Awards Banquet for the Governor's Council on Fitness. Governor Mike Beebe applauded our team; encouraged them to keep promoting this fun physical fitness program, and gave his support for their continued efforts.

We have just begun our new school year and have recently selected this year's jump rope team for Daisy Bates Elementary that now consists of 20 jumpers. I recently contacted the USA Jump Rope Organization based in Texas who is the governing body for this sport in our nation. In speaking with their administration, they informed me that Arkansas is one state that does not have any representation in the national organization of competitive jump roping. At a recent board meeting, the director of USA Jump Rope stated that she would like to assist in promoting this sport in our state. Currently, Daisy Bates Elementary has the only jump rope team in Arkansas. Our future goals include implementing teams in other schools and venues then hosting a regional competition in Little Rock to form an All-Star competitive jump rope team to represent our state. This is one of the few sports that permit individuals to compete both nationally and internationally beginning as early as 9 years old.

With this goal in mind, part of the USA National Jump Rope Team came to Little Rock on October 1-2, 2010, to provide a demonstration and free workshop for our jump rope team. The members of Team USA that were in attendance range in age from 12 – 23 years old. As a group comprised of 10 athletes, they are known as HFS Jump Force, and they represent some of the most elite competitors in the world in the sport of jump roping. HFS Jump Force is incredibly talented and recently returned from England where Team USA placed third in the 2010 IRSF World Championships with representation from over 48 countries around the world. They placed in numerous individual competitions, and one team member placed first overall in the world in his division. HFS Jump Force is also USA Jump Rope Regional, National, and Grand National Champions as well as AAU Olympics Individual and All-Around Champions. They have been in the national news as well as on talk shows promoting the sport of jump roping and physical fitness.

During their visit, they provided two public demonstrations for our community including a segment to showcase our local team, the Daisy Bates Jumpers. The first performance was held at Daisy Bates Elementary in the gymnasium at 2:00 PM on October 1, 2010. The second performance coincided with the 2010 Walk Now for Autism Speaks and was held at the Clinton Library at 11:00 AM on October 2, 2010.