

# The Virginia Journal



Virginia Association for  
Health, Physical Education,  
Recreation, and Dance

SPRING 2016

Vol. 37, No. 1



*Photo taken by Susan Burchett*

VAHPERD Members,

*It is my pleasure to serve as the editor of The Virginia Journal (TVJ) and Communicator. Enclosed you will find the Spring 2016 issue. I hope to continue the successful publications of TVJ and Communicator.*

*However, the success of TVJ and the Communicator only go as far as the members and our submissions. I ask that you continue to submit the quality work you have in the past. Let the state, region and nation know the outstanding work we are doing in VAHPERD. So this is my continued call for manuscripts for the Fall 2016 issue of TVJ and news information for the Communicator. The TVJ and Communicator depend on the submissions from our exceptional professionals working in the field.*

*So please continue to e-mail me your manuscripts and news by July 15, 2016 as a Word attachment for the two publications. Please follow the manuscript guidelines posted in each issue of TVJ. My contact information is below.*

Sincerely,

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## About VAHPERD

### Mission Statement

VAHPERD is a professional association of educators that advocate quality programs in health, physical education, recreation, dance and sport. The association seeks to facilitate the professional growth and educational practices and legislation that will impact the profession.

### VAHPERD Values

- Excellence in teaching, research and educational practices in HPERD and related professions
- Positive efforts to promote our disciplines
- Professional integrity and high ethical standards
- Effective communication within and between members and related professionals
- An active and healthy lifestyle
- Embracing the role of special and diverse populations

### VAHPERD Priorities

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Education

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## President's Message

Chad Triolet



Greeting VAHPERD members and colleagues:

As this is being written, I am less than a month into one of the shortest presidencies in the history of VAHPERD. That being said, I do not see the abbreviated term as a challenge but an opportunity to continue the positive direction our organization is moving thanks to the leadership of Regina

Kirk and Fred Milbert. As my new leadership role takes shape, it is my goal to improve communication and focus on doing what we (VAHPERD) can do to support YOU, our members, by providing multiple opportunities (training, conferences, advocacy, resources, etc.) to improve our profession and have a positive impact on creating a "Healthy, Active Virginia" for our students.

Since my last message, I have been busy representing VAHPERD in a number of capacities. I have participated in numerous conference calls and meetings to discuss, plan, and organize VAHPERD related matters. I worked with President Milbert to facilitate the new Sun Safety Grant. I assisted with the planning and organization for the 2016 SHAPE Southern District Conference. With President Milbert's support, I coordinated the Fall 2015 VAHPERD Leadership Development Conference in Richmond. In February, I attended and presented at the SHAPE Southern District Conference in Williamsburg. I am looking forward to the 2016 Shape National Convention in Minneapolis, MN in April. I'm always honored to represent VAHPERD at these events and will continue to do my best to building and strengthening relationships with other professionals in service of VAHPERD.

Moving forward, the Board of Directors will be approving the 2016-2017 VAHPERD Budget and preparing the for the 2016 VAHPERD Convention (more information on the convention is below). We are also looking into options for a potential name change. There are several reasons that we are considering a name change. First, our current name may not effectively represent the make-up of our membership. Most of our members are Health and Physical Education professionals, they are not recreation and/or dance professionals. There are other organizations that cater to those professions. In broader terms, recreation and dance fall under the broad umbrella of health and physical education (which also includes fitness, wellness, physical activity, sports, etc.). Second, our acronym, VAHPERD, sounds very similar to VAPERZ which is the term commonly used for e-cigarette shops or vaping. Third, a name change may improve the marketability of our organization which may lead to future grant opportunities.

Speaking of grant opportunities, last year VAHPERD was able to take advantage of a couple health promotion grants. We have submitted applications for two more grants for 2016-2017. We are very hopeful that we will have good news to report regarding these new grant opportunities and continue to build on our successes using grant to promote healthy behaviors in Virginia.

As we wrap up another school year, I would like challenge all members to take some time to reflect on your program and perform

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## President-Elect's Message

Susan Nye



Happy Spring,

Greetings VAHPERD members and colleagues. I feel honored that I have the opportunity to lead our organization and serve the membership in the role of President Elect. Thank you for your support! As President-Elect, I plan to focus my energy towards membership initiatives and to address the VAHPERD mission which

seeks to facilitate the professional growth, educational practices and legislation of our profession. We have so many creative and talented educators around the state that have an expertise within dance, recreation, adapted physical education, and health and physical education. All of these individuals could help strengthen the VAHPERD organization. I would like to work with these talented individuals to grow our membership and reach all eight regions within Virginia. In addition, I believe that by growing our membership we could help our members become advocates for our profession and in turn assist our Lobbyist when it comes to the promotion of various legislative efforts.

My second initiative will focus on the Professional Growth and Development of our members. There are already wonderful Professional Development opportunities that are supported by the VAHPERD organization which include the Southwest Virginia workshop, the Health and Physical Activity Institute (HPAI), the VAHPERD conference, and the Outstanding Health and Physical Education Programs (OHPEP) but I believe we can do MORE... I believe we can do MORE to support our members particularly with the implementation of the new Health and Physical Education SOLs. In addition, the VAHPERD website has seen some amazing changes however, I would like to work to provide more resources regarding different health and physical education units as well as possible SOL specific Webinars. The website could be used as a vehicle to reach more VAHPERD members across our vast state. Finally, I would like to assist superintendents and principals with their understanding of what it means to have a quality health and physical education program.

In June, I plan on attending the SHAPE National Leadership Development Conference (LDC) in Denver, CO and in July, I plan on attending the SHAPE Southern District LDC in Baton Rouge, LA. I am very proud to represent VAHPERD at these events and look forward to building and strengthening relationships with other professionals from our state, our district, and our national organizations.

It is my honor to serve you and I look forward to advancing the VAHPERD organization by working collaboratively with Past President Milbert, President Triolet, the VAHPERD board, and VAHPERD members. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at [nyevahperd@gmail.com](mailto:nyevahperd@gmail.com).

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## Executive Director's Message

Henry Castelvechchi



It's the end of another school year and the VAHPERD board has had a busy year. This past February, Virginia hosted the SHAPE America Southern District Convention in Williamsburg. Many of the attendees came from other states within the Southern District and were able to see the quality of teachers and programs we offer in Virginia. The feedback that I received from the at-

tendees and leadership of Southern District made me proud of our state! Thank you to those who attended and had a part in making it a successful convention. Also from the feedback that we received from the attendees, this year we will be implementing an app for the convention. Be on the lookout for how you can download the app and start using it.

Pat Larsen and the Membership Committee have been actively searching this past year for ways to enhance your membership. One of the benefits that they researched and we will be implementing this coming year is professional liability insurance. VAHPERD has worked with Loomis and LaPann, who offers insurance coverage to members of the United States Olympic Committee, National Organization of Coaches Association Directors, and many state athletic director and coaches associations. This benefit is included in your professional membership fee and more information will be sent out early summer.

The General Division will be working on an initiative this summer promoting the field of health and physical education to high school students. There are many jobs coming available in Virginia and we need quality students to fill these positions. Check out the spring edition of the Communicator to find a list of the 21 colleges and universities in Virginia that offer HPE programs.

Remember there are great professional development opportunities during the summer. Check the VAHPERD website for workshops in your area. Have a productive summer and I hope to see you all in the fall in Richmond for our annual state convention.

Henry



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## Past President's Message

Fred Milbert



Spring Greetings to all VAHPERD members and colleagues,

My first task as the Past President is to give a huge THANK YOU to everyone that contributed to the success of the *Southern District SHAPE Convention*. I have heard great comments from many attendees about their appreciation and admiration for the work we did to support their time in Williamsburg. The Southern District Leadership shared their sincere appreciation for VAHPERD's seamless collaboration and ongoing efforts to ensure everyone had a wonderful experience. Ellen Eisman's efforts and leadership were a large part of the smooth and efficient way the Southern District SHAPE Convention was a success. Now, as Past President, I will be working with our new Convention Manager Ellen Eisman to provide a great experience at our convention Richmond in November. We have made a good choice in having her as our convention manager.

I want to also welcome Michael Moore, our new Web Master and Misti Wajciechowski, our new OHPEP Coordinator. I believe both of these folks will be great assets to VAHPERD's ability to reach more of our professionals.

The VAHPERD organization is continuing to move forward with great leadership as Chad Triolet takes on his role as President and works to engage all members in the activities of the organization. I am looking forward to supporting him and Susan Nye, our President -Elect, as the organizations takes on the challenges of improving advocacy, providing professional development for teachers, and increasing the resources available to all health and physical educators in Virginia. I know they are going to reach out to the membership in many ways and engage you in their efforts and purpose. I encourage you to accept their challenge, take a leadership role and opportunity and turn your experiences into great things for others. I intend to continue my support for you and your efforts as professionals.

As an organization, VAHPERD still faces many challenges in the future. As I write this letter, a survey has been provided to the membership seeking input on the possible change in the name of this organization. The Board of Directors has taken steps to engage every member in this process. I hope that you have participated in the survey and offered your opinion on how we should be branded and represent the professionals in our state. VAHPERD is accepting participation and management of grant opportunities to help increase funding support for our annual budget. The benefits of this leadership effort go far beyond just receiving funding, it also helps us provide resources for our future professionals, teachers, administrators, and students about critical relevant health concerns in our communities. These examples are great evidence that VAHPERD is moving in a positive and supportive direction. We need you to be a part of this progress and continuous improvement. Nominations for VAHPERD President-Elect and Division Vice-Presidents are now open. If you have been a section chair in the past, you are eligible for a Division VP position. Help VAHPERD

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# ***Physical Activity Programming for Today's Schools***

Susan Brown Nye, PhD, Professor, James Madison University, *Department of Kinesiology*

Sarah Carson Sackett, PhD, Associate Professor, James Madison University, *Department of Kinesiology*. Associate Director, Morrison Bruce Center

Elizabeth Skidmore Edwards, PhD, Assistant Professor, James Madison University, *Department of Kinesiology*. Executive Director, Morrison Bruce Center.

## **Introduction**

Over half of adolescents do not meet the guidelines of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity (PA) on most days (Sanchez et al., 2007), with the level of PA participation decreasing with age after childhood (Troiano et al., 2007). Adequate PA among adolescents is associated with many health benefits, including improved bone density and mental health, and reduced cardiovascular risk factors, (Hallal, Victora, Azevedo, & Wells, 2006; Janssen & LeBlanc, 2010) as well as psychosocial benefits, including improved social and athletic competence (Stein, Fisher, Berkey, & Colditz, 2007). Participation in PA is also associated with reduced rates of risk behaviors such as smoking, marijuana use, and teen pregnancy (Kimm et al., 2002; Pate, Heath, Dowda, & Trost, 1996). PA levels also indirectly impact adolescent health through its contribution to preventing overweightness and obesity (Patrick et al., 2004), which has been on the rise in recent decades (Ogden & Carroll, 2010). Finally, as both PA participation and weight track into adulthood (Singh, Mulder, Twisk, Ven Mechelen, & Chinapaw, 2008), establishing and maintaining healthy habits in childhood and adolescence will help set the stage for an active and healthy adulthood, for which the health benefits are well-established (Warburton, Nicol, & Bredin, 2006).

School-based interventions offer a unique opportunity to promote PA across gender, socioeconomic, and other divides, in a pre-existing environment that is suitable for PA. After-school programs can be effective at improving PA levels and other health-related aspects, but not all programs are created equal (for a review, see Beets, Beighle, Erwin, & Huberty, 2009). Given the opportunity to utilize the after-school timeframe and school environment to promote PA and improve multiple outcomes among adolescents, it is important to design programs that are well-founded in positive youth development and pedagogical theory to create climates and activities that are likely to effect long-term change. The purpose of this paper is to describe current best practices for designing programs to promote PA among adolescents. In the following two sections, this discussion focuses on both macro- and micro-level factors that adult leaders of these programs can use to achieve the desired engagement, activity, and holistic development of their participants. Macro-level factors are those aspects related to the larger physical environment and social climate that lead to greater engagement and opportunity to facilitate the focal physical, social, emotional, and intellectual skills being practiced and developed. Conversely, micro-level factors are those strategies adult leaders implement directly at the activity level when planning for and effectively implementing PA programs to achieve their related objectives.

## **Effective Macro-Level Program Components and Characteristics**

Looking across adolescent experiences in various extracurricular activities, several factors have been identified as being useful for facilitating positive youth developmental outcomes. This process involves the promotion of physical, psychological, social, intellectual, and emotional assets that will help one become a more competent individual in the present and into adulthood (e.g., Hamilton, Hamilton & Pittman, 2003). For example, the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1995) identified program characteristics such as lessons in forming positive and productive relationships with others, opportunities for learning and practicing decision making skills, exposure to support systems and other resources, and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle as being essential for promoting personal and social growth in adolescents.

More recently, the Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth developed one of the more comprehensive lists of factors embodied by programs that were judged to be more likely to promote positive development in their participants (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002). More specifically, program features that were regarded as having the most potential to facilitate exposure to, effective instruction of, and the adoption of developmental competencies and assets were: (a) physical and psychological safety; (b) appropriate structure; (c) supportive relationships; (d) opportunities to belong; (e) positive social norms; (f) support for efficacy and mattering; and (g) integration of family, school, and community efforts. A program that provides *physical and psychological safety* is one that protects the bodily well-being of its participants by reducing and/or eliminating dangers such as unsecure meeting spaces and dangerous means of getting to and from its facilities. Additionally, a program that upholds this standard cultivates psychological safety through the provision and support of positive peer and participant-leader interactions that lead to feelings of satisfaction and self-worth as opposed to fear and rejection. *Appropriate structure* refers to the communication and the consistent reinforcement of roles and behavioral and attitudinal expectations. Additionally, this factor suggests leaders should have age-appropriate expectations of participants' abilities to remain within the delineated program boundaries, whether they are psychological, social, physical, or physical in nature. Similarly, the program feature of *positive social norms* is believed to help foster development through the promotion of an explicit set of values as it relates to normative behavior of the larger societies (e.g., scholastic, regional, cultural, etc.) in which the program resides. With consistent reinforcement of both program- and social-level expectations, participants are provided a predictable structure that allows them to feel like competent participants when they comply

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and helps them engage more freely and with more enjoyment in the program activities. By providing *supportive relationships*, programs are fostering a sense of warmth, caring, closeness, guidance, support, and effective communication between its members. When surrounded by compassionate, trustworthy, and encouraging peers and adults, adolescents are more likely to successfully navigate through the exploration and development of their personal growth and asset building experiences. Relatedly, the effectiveness of establishing a mastery-oriented climate is a concept that has been advocated along with and as part of establishing and maintaining supportive relationships (e.g., Weiss, 2008). These recommendations suggest that program leaders should reinforce adolescents' success-perceptions that focus on self-improvement and learning, and that the participants should be provided with opportunities to exercise skills such as self-regulation and independent decision making in the activity context.

The fifth feature of positive developmental settings as proposed by the committee illustrates the need for *opportunities to belong* (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002). More specifically, when members develop a sense of being a meaningful part of a valued group, youth are able to not only develop and refine social skills, but also work on identity development in reference to their group-relevant peers. Additionally, willingness to engage with more intrinsic motivation and persistence is enhanced. Some of the most successful youth development programs also facilitate *efficacy building and mattering* amongst their young participants. To achieve this objective, the counsel recommends youth leaders utilize strategies that empower, grant responsibility to, and challenge the youth as well as provide feedback pertaining to personal improvement to help establish a sense of perceived competence. These efficacy beliefs, in turn, promote individuals' motivation to continue to engage in the learning and performance of the positive, group-relevant behaviors and activities. In addition to increasing the belief that one is an important and capable being, opportunities to actually become a more physically, intellectually, psychologically, emotionally, and socially skilled individual are a central and necessary component of a program aimed at positive youth development. More successful programs not only help those involved strengthen skills directly related to the activity at hand, but also promote the advancement of skills that enable the participants to be well-rounded, prepared, and well-resourced individuals in general life.

The last component mentioned by the committee (i.e., the *integration of family, school and community efforts*) is one of the most difficult objectives for a program to achieve (Hamilton et al., 2003). Efforts can certainly be made to involve, educate and incorporate the various systems surrounding individuals participating in a particular program; however, many believe it is overly ambitious to expect a single group to achieve system-wide coordination and change amongst all of its members.

Overall, when programs systematically and consistently incorporate these contextual factors into their physical and social environments, adolescents are more likely to develop the focal skills of the programs, largely in part to a greater investment and engagement in the required activities and initiatives. It is this engagement aspect that then connects the macro-level factors to the micro-level programming aspects described below.

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## Effective Micro-Level Program Components and Characteristics

The creation of a quality school-based PA program requires several key components such as: (a) creating appropriate physical activities; (b) developing the PA parameters; and (c) implementing directives for program leaders. Once the goal(s) of the program have been established, a scope and sequence of the appropriate physical activities, ideas, and topics to be covered during the program should be created.

Providing a variety of PA options is a key aspect related to the micro-level strategy of *creating appropriate physical activities* and has been found to optimize time on task and engagement through the consideration and accommodation of student interests (NASPE, 2013). When participants are interested in an activity, they are more likely to stay on task and continue to engage within that activity (Weaver et al, 2015; DeAngelis, 2001). Providing participants with a variety of age-appropriate activities allows them to find personal meaning, relevance, and value along with a feeling of control, which can lead to a heightened level of motivation and engagement (NASPE, 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Variety can also be achieved by dividing activities into different movement experiences such as physiological activities focusing on fitness and skills, psychological activities focusing on enjoyment, challenge, and positive self-concept, and social interaction activities focusing on teamwork, being with friends, and cooperating with others (Rink, Hall & Williams, 2010) and providing opportunities related to each category on a consistent basis. Furthermore, a combination of age appropriate team sports, individual sports, and lifetime activities should be offered so participants can voluntarily choose the activity that most appeals to them. Finally, engaging participants in small sided or small group games will allow for multiple opportunities to participate. Relatedly, any activity where participants must wait in lines to be active, are exclusionary, or feel unsafe should be removed from the program (Graham, 2008).

The *PA parameters* for the program are developmental to ensure safety and support to all who are involved. Considerations include staff to participant ratios, facility and equipment needs, and the type of activity climate that is structured. First, it is recommended that a staff to youth ratio be maintained. If the participants are between grades 1 through 3, then a ratio of 1:12 should be used, whereas a ratio of 1:15 should be used with participants in grades 4 through 12 (NASPE, 2013). If there are mixed-level age groups in a single program, a 1:10 ratio is deemed appropriate. Another factor to consider includes the indoor and outdoor playing areas which should provide enough space for the participants to move freely without risk of injury. Within these playing areas, a leader would want to create activity boundaries and be aware of objects that would not allow for safe movement around the space (i.e. limbs, uneven ground surfaces, etc.). In addition, a thorough inventory of the available equipment should be conducted and appropriate storage areas should be created. The number and types of equipment that are available will help to determine which physical activities can be provided for the participants. There should be enough equipment for all of the participants in order to foster maximum participation within the activity. Lack of equipment can lead to an increase in wait time, causing a restriction of movement that can lead to a decrease in the fun and enjoyment in the program

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activities for the participants (Graham, 2008).

The implementation of three different types of activity climates (i.e., free play, structured, and autonomy-supportive) have been shown to promote PA engagement with the participants (Weaver et al, 2015; Beighle et al, 2010). A well-rounded program will use a combination of these three types to meet the needs and interests of the participants. A free play environment provides endless choice options. Participants get to choose what activity to engage in, for how long, and at what level of intensity. The instructors are readily available for supervision purposes and to provide a variety of equipment options. In contrast, a structured environment includes activities where the length and intensity levels are decided by the instructor. These activities are designed to promote maximum participation and to provide activity modifications that will allow every participant to find success, regardless of their skill level. Autonomy-supportive environments are similar to free play, but the leader selects the activities. Various developmentally appropriate choices are provided to the participants and facilitated by the instructor. For example, the environment could be arranged into three areas with a basketball game in one area, a dance activity in another area, and a pickleball activity in a third area.

Creating *directives for program leaders* is a critical piece when establishing a well-organized and successful school-based PA program (NASPE, 2013; Rink, Hall & Williams, 2010). These leaders need to be knowledgeable regarding administrative obligations, management protocols, and effective instructional techniques. Administrative obligations focus on the scheduling of programs, training personnel, acquiring funding sources, and collaborating with school officials and parents (Rink, Hall, & Williams, 2010). Management protocols refer to the program's routines and rules. Routines are directions provided to participants for how they will enter and leave the PA space, how attendance will be collected, how an activity will be started or stopped, how participants will get and put away equipment, and what to do in case of a fire drill or another type of emergency (Graham, 2008). As explained by the macro-level factor, *appropriate structures*, rules with consequences help to create a fair, safe and equitable climate for the program and focus predominantly on behavioral expectations such as respect for others, using equipment appropriately, and acting safely while engaging in the activities (NASPE, 2013; Graham, 2008).

To effectively deliver instructions and activities, leaders must be enthusiastic role models who embody a positive and caring disposition with a thorough understanding of youth and their cognitive, motor, and psychosocial needs and abilities (NASPE, 2013; Beighle et al, 2010; DeAngelis, 2001). An understanding of the participants abilities can allow leaders to deliver a progression of activities that are optimally challenging (i.e., not too difficult, which could lead to frustration and too easy, which could lead to boredom). When presenting activities, leaders will want to provide instructions using a warm and affective tone to encourage all to participate regardless of the skill level or ability. A leader will also want to be able to demonstrate how to modify equipment and create adaptations to rules and strategies of games to promote successful engagement (Graham, 2008). Furthermore, instructions that make connections to the participants' daily lives

in purposeful and meaningful ways can lead to an increase in activity engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Whenever possible, leaders should lead activities accompanied by music. The use of music has been found to be a key motivational factor when promoting PA engagement (Rink, Hall, & Williams, 2010).

### Conclusion

The creation of quality PA programs is not a simple task; however, by utilizing best practices, afterschool programs can provide youth with a much needed boost regarding their PA engagement. Programs that provide a supportive and enjoyable environment that contain a variety of activities, reflect the participants' interests and needs, and are led by program leaders who understand the development of youth could help to inspire today's youth to continue to be physically active for a lifetime.

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## ***President's Message***

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a self-assessment of the school year. Teaching should not be a stagnant profession where the lessons and activities never change. As educators, we focus a lot of our time on student achievement and tracking progress. Rarely do we, the teachers, take the time needed to evaluate our instructional practices and their impact on student progress/achievement. A quick self-assessment can help you achieve that goal. Evaluate your successes and challenges for this past school year and use that information to plan ways to make your instructional program better for 2016-2017.

Speaking of improving your instructional program, one of the best ways to do that is to take advantage of these fantastic upcoming professional development opportunities. I hope you will consider joining me in participating/supporting some of these events.

- The 2016 Virginia Summer Health and Physical Activity Institute at James Madison University – <http://www.jmu.edu/kinesiology/hpainstitute/> is scheduled for **July 11-13, 2016**. This conference offers teachers a wide range of sessions that cross the health and physical education spectrum. Attendees get to see the “best of the best” and get the rare opportunity to “eat, sleep, and live” health and physical education with colleagues from across the commonwealth and country. This amazing conference is a great way to get motivated for a new school year.
- 2016 VAHPERD Convention in Richmond, VA – Our annual conference will be back on track after co-hosting the SHAPE Southern District conference in February. This year’s theme, “Be a Champion for a Healthy, Active Virginia” is designed to focus attention on the important role that health and physical education teachers have on promoting a healthy and active lifestyle for our students. Add **November 11-13, 2016** to your calendar and prepare to join us for this amazing professional development opportunity.

Please know that your membership in VAHPERD is valued and appreciated. Your thoughts and feedback are very important to us. If you have any questions or need assistance, please feel free to contact me ([ctriolet@gmail.com](mailto:ctriolet@gmail.com)). I look forward to working with you and for you!

Chad Triolet  
Be a Champion for a Healthy, Active Virginia

PS – A quick “shout out” to all the members of VAHPERD who contributed to the success of the SHAPE Southern District Conference in Williamsburg, VA. Co-hosting the regional conference required a great deal of collaboration and we are thankful for all of the members that stepped up to assist. Congratulations for a job well done!!

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# *Risk Management Strategies for Coaches*

Bob Case, PhD Associate Professor in the *Sport Management Program*, Old Dominion University

Over the past twenty years, hundreds of lawsuits have been filed that involve coaches of sport teams (Cotten & Wolohan, 2013). Some of these lawsuits might have been avoided if more emphasis was placed on the development of comprehensive risk management plans and related strategies. Basically, risk management is a proactive approach where possible risks in sport settings are identified with efforts made to plan and implement strategies to manage the risks. The ultimate goal of risk management is to provide the safest environment possible for participants and spectators as well as to minimize the probability of lawsuits due to injuries involving athletes and spectators.

If a practice or game can't be run safely as planned (e.g., threat of lightening due to poor weather conditions), then modifications to the existing plan and activity may be needed. These are the types of risk management decisions that coaches make on a daily basis. Risk management decisions take place throughout the day and range from small and easy decisions about modifying existing practice drills to major decisions about whether a game or practice should be cancelled.

Successful athletic directors and coaches take risk management seriously. In a survey of high school athletic directors, Case (2010) found that a basic understanding of risk management and legal issues was deemed to be an essential competency for effective athletic directors. Furthermore, successful athletic directors and coaches take every opportunity to utilize risk management "best practices" in the day-to-day operation and administration of their athletic programs. What are some of the risk management "best practices" used by successful coaches?

First, planning is considered to be at the heart of risk management. Best practices in developing coaching plans involve written plans that are well-designed with efforts made to consider every possible legal contingency so that practices are safe, secure, and educational. Coaching plans, for example, should include not only practice objectives but they should include safe drill formations and learning progressions, the use of developmentally appropriate equipment, reasonable matching of participants for drills, warm-up and cool down activities, etc. Also, sound planning is not done just for instructional purposes but planning for emergencies is considered to be essential. For instance, risk management "best practices" might include assessing the staffing needs related to the number of certified athletic trainers assigned to games and practices, establishing sound medical approval procedures for injured athletes who want to return to play, updating coach first aid and CPR certifications, and rehearsing emergency action plans and evacuation procedures.

Second, facility inspections conducted on a daily basis are an important part of risk management "best practices." Coaches are some of the first people to know if sport facilities and equipment are damaged and potentially unsafe. Although athletic directors, maintenance staff, and referees inspect facilities, it is the coaches who are in the front lines of facility inspections. Again, identifying and reporting facility and equipment problems is part of a proactive approach to risk management and providing a safe environment.

Third, supervision is another key area of risk management. Coaches owe a duty to their athletes to make sure that the athletes know, understand, and appreciate the inherent risks of an activity. In contact sport activities, in particular, it is important that both athletes and parents be informed about the potential dangers of the activity, especially if the activity is being performed for the first time. Coaching plans should reflect an added degree of safety when specific or closer supervision is required (Carpenter, 2014).

Risk management can be more than the day-to-day planning involved in running safe and secure athletic programs. Larger "macro" legal considerations are also part of effective risk management. For instance, lawsuits dealing with sexual harassment, hazing, bullying, race discrimination, gender discrimination including Title IX, disabilities and ADA, product liability, and violence are increasingly appearing in sport settings. In addition, constitutional law violations have become commonplace in recent years. If team training rules are allegedly violated and a player is abruptly thrown off the team without any type of due process, the player and his or her parents may turn around and sue the school district and coaches for violating the player's constitutional rights based on Fifth Amendment and due process claims. Another example could include a player who is dismissed from the team for posting a comment critical of the coach on social media. The coach may not like the comment that was posted but the player might be protected legally by certain free speech rights under the First Amendment.

This situation could once again lead to a lawsuit if team training rules and discipline procedures were not previously established using proactive risk management principles and strategies. Locker searches, drug testing, and team dress code enforcement are additional areas that fall under the umbrella of constitutional law.

Another area where athletic programs experience legal problems involves employment law. Procedures and policies related to the hiring, firing, and evaluation of coaches have received their fair share of legal attention. Although contracts are a key part of employment law (e.g., employment contracts), it is not uncommon to see employment law claims filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) that can lead to litigation involving race, gender, disabilities, pay, and/or age discrimination issues. A comprehensive risk management plan looks closely at all aspects of employment law ranging from well-written job descriptions and position advertisements to properly interviewing coaching applicants to establishing fair coaching performance standards to implementing legally sound employee progressive discipline procedures. Using risk management "best practices" when writing employee manuals, handbooks, program policies, team training rules, and progressive discipline procedures can pay dividends when attempting to create a "lawsuit free" environment for your sport program (Spengler, Anderson, Connaughton & Baker, 2009).

Failing to act the way a reasonable and prudent coach would act in a similar situation is the basic definition of negligence. As mentioned previously, coaches owe athletes a duty and failure to perform this duty could lead to a breach. If the coach's actions are

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shown to have a direct link (i.e., proximate cause) to an athlete's injury and resulting damages (including hospital bills), then a negligence claim is a real possibility. Most sport negligence claims are civil claims that seek monetary damages rather than criminal actions that result in incarceration or jail time.

Although negligence claims seem to be the most common type of lawsuit found in sport settings, a new era of litigation in sport is wide open to constitutional, civil rights, product liability, antitrust, intentional tort (player and fan violence), contract law, employment law, and intellectual property claims. Civil law, criminal law, and administrative law actions (e.g., arbitrations) are all part of the growing landscape of sport law (Clement & Grady, 2012).

Recent newspaper articles about bullying, cyber bullying, hazing, and sexual harassment have reported incidents where athletes have assaulted other athletes or coaches have sexually harassed athletes or other staff members. Many states have enacted anti-bully and anti-cyber bullying laws (Case, 2015). A ritualistic form of initiation called hazing has occurred in selected sport settings in the past. Additionally, sport programs are not immune to sexual harassment claims. Recent cases have involved player on player sexual harassment with sexual abuse and violence being linked to some of these claims as well.

Coaches who are involved in organizing summer sport camps would be well-served to develop a comprehensive risk management plan for their camp. The plan could include pre-camp, during camp, and post camp risk management considerations. Conducting a risk management "audit" of your program and holding a risk management training workshop for camp staff prior to the start of a sport camp is recommended. Many legal topics can be covered when teaching a sport summer camp legal workshop for the staff. For example, reviewing the ten legal duties of coaches (Martens, 2012) would be an excellent starting point.

Finally, transferring program and participant risk through the purchase of insurance is another aspect of a comprehensive risk management plan. In summer sport camp programs, acquiring medical insurance for participants is needed in case of injuries. Fire, theft, and flood damage insurance is another important consideration as well as obtaining personal and professional liability insurance coverage for coaches. Professional and personal liability insurance is especially recommended for coaches who work in private schools.

Although risk management plans are completed prior to the start of a sport program, plans can experience subtle changes and modifications if and when additional legal concerns are identified. This is just part of the event planning process. Many college sport management and coaching education curriculums require an undergraduate course in sport law. A major part of a sport law course involves developing a thorough understanding of risk management. Classes often focus on the various content areas related to sport law such as negligence, product liability, contract law, constitutional law,... But, the overriding umbrella that draws the various legal topics into one cohesive unit is risk management. Being able to identify potential risks and then treat the risks through the development and implementation of a comprehensive risk management plan is a class requirement found in most sport management college programs.

In the final analysis, if a coach does his or her risk manage-

ment homework and initiates planning in advance, then he or she is moving in the right direction to making the sport program safe and lawsuit free.

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## Past President's Message

*continued from page 3*

continue to improve. VAHPERD needs you! Remember, every member of VAHPERD is eligible to vote. Let's have another slate of outstanding nominees. Nominations are also being accepted for VAHPERD awards. Help us recognize the outstanding professionals in Virginia. Nominate a colleague!

I looking forward to working with President Triolet, and President-Elect Nye, by supporting the upcoming convention. I am very honored to have served as your President over the last year. I was fortunate enough to have a great support group in the Board of Directors, and my fellow Presidents. My hope is that we moved things more than one or two steps forward, but that I was in some way a part of turning VAHPERD into an outstanding professional organization that has a voice with legislators and is able to impact student learning and wellness.

It has been a privilege to represent you at all things VAHPERD, thank you for that opportunity.

Sincerely,

Fred Milbert  
Past President VAHPERD

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# *Students with Obesity in Recess*

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## **Introduction**

It is probably not new for the reader to hear that obesity is a major problem in the United States. The percentage of obese Americans has skyrocketed in the last couple of decades. Many of the readers have probably heard that obesity in childhood and adolescents often leads to obesity in adults. It is also probably not new to the reader to hear that adults who are obese are at risk of many other health problems. Something needs to be done. The possibility of the potential obesity of a child needs to be halted. It needs to be addressed in childhood and adolescents, before the individual grows into adulthood. One place to address this problem is at school, in recess.

## **Defining Obesity**

Adults are considered obese when they are about 35 pounds overweight (The National Conference of State Legislatures: Obesity Statistics, 2014). Defining obesity for a child is not as straight forward because of the fact that a child is usually growing in height and muscle mass. Generally, a child is not considered obese until the weight is at least 10 percent higher than what is recommended for his/her height and body type. As an example, if a child should weigh 70 pounds and he/she weighs 77 pounds, he/she is considered obese. Obesity most commonly begins between the ages of 5 and 6, or during adolescence. Studies have shown that an adolescent who is obese between the ages of 10 and 13 has an 80 percent chance of becoming an adult who is obese (The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2011).

## **Prevalence of Obesity**

More now than ever, children have become inactive, a cause of obesity. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Protection (CDC), childhood obesity has more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents in the past 30 years (CDC, 2014). As far as prevalence, it is estimated that one in five children in the U.S. is overweight (The Obesity Society, 2014). The percentage of children aged 6–11 years in the United States who were obese increased from 7% in 1980 to nearly 18% in 2012. Similarly, the percentage of adolescents aged 12–19 years who were obese increased from 5% to nearly 21% over the same period (CDC, 2014). Obesity has immediate effects as well as long-term effects on children and their health for the rest of their lives. In two states, obesity rates now exceed 35 percent for the first time and 20 states have obesity rates at or above 30 percent (The National Conference of State Legislatures: Obesity Statistics, 2014).

## **Risks Associated with Obesity**

Many people probably do not comprehend the risks of being

obese. An individual with obesity has an increased risk of some potentially life-threatening diseases including:

- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Osteoarthritis (a degeneration of cartilage and its underlying bone within a joint)
- Dyslipidemia (for example, high total cholesterol or high levels of triglycerides)
- Type 2 diabetes
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Gallbladder disease
- Sleep apnea and respiratory problems
- Some cancers (pancreas, kidney, prostate, endometrial, breast, and colon) (The National Conference of State Legislatures: Obesity Statistics, 2014).
- Risk for bone and joint problems
- Sleep issues
- Social issues
- Psychological issues such as poor self-esteem (CDC, 2014).

## **Obesity in Childhood often means Obesity in Adulthood**

As previously noted, studies have shown that a child/adolescent who is obese between the ages of 10 and 13 has an 80 percent chance of becoming an obese adult (The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2011). The battle for maintaining a healthy weight starts at a very young age when children are in elementary and middle school. Overweight children are more likely to become overweight adults, and the trend usually starts at young ages (CBS News: Fat Kids Become Fat Adults., 2005).

Why does obesity carry on into the adolescent's adulthood? Though obesity is one of the easiest "diseases" to recognize, it is one of the hardest to cure. Adolescents who are obese develop habits that are hard to break. Unhealthy eating and the lack of exercise that causes the weight gain typically becomes an unbreakable lifestyle. Adolescents these days aren't getting enough physical activity to burn off the calories that they intake. Obesity becomes a lifelong issue, a fight for life. Of particular interest is that even obese adolescents that temporarily lose their weight tend to gain the weight back in time. The best way to stop this from happening is to introduce a healthier lifestyle to children at a young age and always avoiding obesity (The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2011).

## **So What Now? Help from Schools**

To this point the authors have defined obesity, stated its preva-

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lence, and the risks associated with it including the fact that obese adolescents are generally going to become obese adults. The question the authors now ask, “What can schools do?” Budget cuts have reduced the amount of music, art, band, and most importantly for this discussion, physical education that students receive at the elementary school level. This is not helping the problem of obesity. It is hurting the problem as children have less time to participate in calorie burning activities associated with physical education such as running, skipping, hopping for long periods of time. So what is the solution, or what part can elementary schools play in this huge problem? The answer may be in recess.

#### Benefits of the Recess Setting for Obesity

Recess is basically a planned, supervised activity allowing time for active, free play. It is suggested that kids participate in a minimum of 20 minutes of recess a day. Recess should not be taken away as a consequence of punishment. Ideally recess should be outside but conditions such as weather sometimes require it to be inside. (Praxis Physical Education: Practice and Study Guide: Benefits of Recess for Elementary School Children, 2015).

Simply stated, the benefits of the recess setting are high for all children. Included in these benefits are both physical and social benefits. In terms of general physical benefits, recess has been shown to lead to:

- Improvement of out-of-school activity levels – children usually are involved in physical activities on days in which they participate in in-school physical activities (Dale, Corbin, & Dale, 2000).
- Improvement of general fitness and endurance levels for children (Kids Exercise, 2009). Included in these “general fitness and endurance levels could include the following:
  - building strength
  - improving coordination
  - improving cardiovascular fitness that helps to reduce childhood obesity and its related health complications. (Praxis Physical Education: Practice and Study Guide: Benefits of Recess for Elementary School Children, 2015).

Again, to gain these benefits, children need to participate in quality recess to battle the possibilities of obesity.

#### Quality Recess. Modifications for Administrators, Teachers, and Students

Quality recess involves work from the administration, teacher and students. Below are examples of these characteristics of quality recess? They are items that administrators, teachers, and students should strive to obtain.

- Recess should be divided into a number of time-frames interspersed throughout the day
- Recess should take place on an appropriate space that is not overcrowded or un-safe

- Recess should include age-appropriate equipment. Size of equipment (e.g. balls) should correspond to the age and size of the students
- Recess should be “governed” by rules in which children help to create
- Recess should include inclusive activities for all children (Kovar et. al, 2009)
- Recess should include structured and unstructured activities, but allow freedom of choice in terms of which ones students participate
- Recess activities should not be too competitive, they should also include cooperative activities

#### Conclusion

Obesity is a major problem in the United States. Something needs to be done to fight the expansion of this condition. The possibility of the potential obesity of a child, and the continuation of the disorder in adolescents, needs to be halted as the majority of these children will enter adulthood as obese. One place to fight a child becoming obese is in recess. This manuscript has provided information for teachers to provide for these children during recess..

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## ***Red, White, and New: Richmond Elite Pro Basketball Team Helps the ABA to Bounce Back from the Past and Virginia State University Students to Bounce into the Future***

Leon Wright Bey, Professor, HPERD/Sport Management Department, Virginia State University, Virginia State University, VA

Joyce Patterson, Owner, Richmond Elite ABA Professional Basketball Team, Richmond, VA

Linda Person, Chair, HPERD/Sport Management Department, Virginia State University, Virginia State University, VA

Do you remember when the American Basketball Association (ABA), that 60's and 70's league, spawned the illustrious careers of a bevy of superstars such as eventual NBA Hall of Famers, Moses Malone, who became "the first high school player to go directly from high school to the NBA" (Smith, 2016) when he moved on from Petersburg High School to play for the Utah Stars in 1974, and Julius "Dr. J" Erving, who once played for the Virginia Squires (Miller, 2005)? Do you remember when the ABA "introduced the three-point shot" and "the world's first Slam-Dunk Contest" that "Dr. J" won? Do you remember the stylish players who "grew outlandishly large Afros" and that "the cheerleaders wore bikinis" (<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/american-basketball-association-debuts>)?

"The original ABA was formed in 1967 and lasted 10 seasons prior to merging four of its teams into the NBA. They were the Indiana Pacers, Denver Nuggets, New Jersey Nets and San Antonio Spurs." Prior to its dissolution, the ABA "produced some of the greatest players of the 20th century...." "In fact, 50% of the NBA All Star team in the first year of the merger were ABA players" (<http://www.americanbasketballassociation.org/#!/history/c66t>).

Wow! What a league! During its heyday, the ABA, with its dazzling red, white, and blue basketball that complemented its players' "freewheeling" style of play, was really something special. Now, for nostalgic avid fans who miss that league, there is no need to dwell on the past because that multicolored ball is still bouncing...in the new ABA. Yes, that's right. The ABA has bounced back and from all indications, it's here to stay.

"Former ABA Commissioner, Dick Tinkham, and Joe Newman brought the ABA back in the 1990's and have formed the largest professional sports league in the world. They made it affordable so that people like me could become owners of a professional basketball team. Currently, we have over 90 teams in the league and it's constantly growing. The league has given over 1,000 players and 200 coaches and officials the opportunity to be a part of this great organization," said Joyce Patterson, an owner of an ABA franchise in Richmond, VA.

A minority-owned team, her Richmond Elite squad is one of the most powerful current (2015-2016) teams in the entire ABA. Under the leadership of Patterson, who was recently "selected to join the Executive Board for the ABA," and her son, General



*Richmond Elite Players and members of "Kid Elite" reflect the Team's Top-Ranked status. Photo taken during half-time of a game when the children were presented certificates and Kid Elite shirts.*



*Du'Vaughan Maxwell (Petersburg High School & Hampton University) and Scooter Renkin (Blue Ridge High School & Indiana University, PA) glide to the basket during recent Richmond Elite home games.*



Manager Jason Patterson, who was recently chosen to serve as the “Division Chairman for the ABA Mid Atlantic Division,” the team was undefeated (6-0) in December 2015 and ranked No. 1 among the league’s 98 teams (<http://www.richmondelitebasketball.com/home.html>).

This current “elite” status is not an anomaly. Since its inception in 2011, the organization has experienced tremendous success. During its inaugural season (2011-2012), the Elite finished with an impressive 12-5 record. The following two seasons, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, the team was crowned “Mid-Atlantic Division Champions” while posting remarkable respective 14-3 and 15-1 records. Last season’s 2014-2015 team finished with a robust 11-4 record (<http://www.richmondelitebasketball.com/>). Many members of the Elite have moved on to play professional basketball overseas.

One of those international players is Brandon Rozzell, who played in Holland. Before joining the Elite, Rozzell starred at Highland Springs High School (Virginia), and was also a key member of Virginia Commonwealth University’s 2011 NCAA Final Four squad. Another local product, Brandon Macklin, who played at Matoaca High School (Virginia) and Virginia State University, played professionally in Australia, while other Elite players have played pro basketball in Japan, Chile, Kosovo, the Dominican Republic, Spain, Columbia, and Montenegro.

On the home front, the current team, which is guided by head coach, Mike Sailes and his assistant, Gene Brown, plays its home games in “Big Ben’s Home Court” at 2206 Westwood Ave. in Richmond, VA. The facility is named after its owner, former Virginia Union University and NBA superstar, Ben Wallace.

Routinely playing in front of “packed houses,” against teams such as the Hampton Roads Stallions, which is owned by David Rodgers, an alumnus of VSU’s undergraduate and graduate Sport Management Programs, members of the Elite’s staff have attracted a very active and loyal fan base.

They have also gained the support of an impressive list of local sponsors, such as Mike Pearson, a Richmond-based entrepreneur

and former member of the Elite’s Board of Directors. He is also the Founder and President of Friends Helping Friends, a local nonprofit organization. Additional sponsors include, but are not limited to, Realty Plus, Black Top Kings and Black Top Queens, Uplift Entertainment (which is owned by another VSU alum, Jermaine Simpson), All B.A.L.L.U, The Dunnivan Company Realtors, Bucks & Banks, and T.H.E. Group, LLC. (<http://www.richmondelitebasketball.com/>).

In addition to partnering with a variety of sponsors, Elite staff members have established various programs to demonstrate their interest in the welfare of their community. One such initiative, “Kid Elite, is a private youth sports program serving children ages 2.5-7 years, in the Richmond metro area. The focus of the program is to promote basketball skill development, healthy lifestyles in youth, and increase access to affordable youth basketball programs” (<http://www.richmondelitebasketball.com/http://>).

In general, “Richmond Elite” has been “involved in many community projects” that include, but are not limited to those that relate to “the MCV/VCU Florence Neal Cooper Smith Professorship – Sickle Cell Research, The American Cancer Society, Alzheimer’s and Diabetes, ... blanket drives for the homeless, food drives, and basketball camps....” The Elite has also been involved in a “Toy Drive,” a “Breast Cancer Walk,” and other collaborative community-based activities (<http://www.richmondelitebasketball.com/>).

To increase awareness about the need to bring a halt to crime in Richmond, while offering its support to families whose loved ones had been victims of criminal activity, the Elite featured a special “Stop the Violence” theme during its first home game in 2016 (January 3<sup>rd</sup>). That event, which involved numerous community advocates, was so powerful that it received significant media coverage from a local television station (Spears, 2016).

The Elite’s altruism has also been extended about 25 miles south of Richmond, at Virginia State University (VSU) wherein a strategic partnership has been developed with its Sport Man-

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agement Majors Club (Club). That type of alliance is consistent with Little's (Little, 2011) belief that partnerships present great opportunities for collaboration and networking and provide students with a wealth of information. It appears that Little and Dr. Linda Person, who serves as Chair of the VSU Department of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Dance/Sport Management (HPERD/SM), have something in common.

"I have always been an advocate of community partnerships with schools and agencies. They help to support student outcomes such as student effort, student behavior and initiative," she said.

The importance of experiential activities in educating students has been discussed for decades and has expanded through experiential learning theories (Dewey, 1938). Person's concurrence with Dewey's notion is quite obvious.

"Through partnerships, such as the one that we have with the Richmond Elite as well as with others (e.g., Student Affairs, NASCAR, Richmond Flying Squirrels, Minor League Baseball, CAA, Mass Communications Department, etc.), HPERD/SM students learn to create, plan and implement programs that benefit the HPERD/SM Department, the University and the community. When experts from those organizations speak to our classes and participate in various events on our campus, they enrich the academic culture, foster an environment that is conducive to networking, and help us to maximize our resources," Person stated.

The partnership with the Elite has definitely been advantageous to VSU. Virtually all of the Elite's interns have come from the Club, an organization for which Dr. Leon Wright Bey, a Professor in the HPERD/SM, serves as Faculty Advisor. The internship is designed to provide students with the type of networking and other highly structured real-life experience that they need to make them more competitive in today's global marketplace. The internship paradigm is consistent with Chaskin and others who have indicated that "a good community/campus partnership is characterized by careful preparation, excellent implementation, and meticulous follow-through" (Chaskin et.al. 2001).

Members of the Elite's staff provide immeasurable opportunities for the aforementioned interns to benefit accordingly. Throughout the school year and/or at certain points during summer months, students assist with the planning, promotion, and execution of a wide variety of camps and other community-based events. They also keep stats, operate the scoreboard and shot clock, work with sponsors, interact with fans, and perform other duties while serving as "Game Day Interns."

Moreover, they acquire specific marketing experience by serving on Street Teams, making cold calls to potential sponsors and partners, and assisting with player profile marketing. VSU interns are also afforded opportunities to learn coaching techniques while assisting the Elite's coaches during practice sessions.

One of the most unique Richmond Elite superstars who participates in such sessions, is Luqman Jaaber, who played at VSU and Virginia Union University (VUU). He also served as head

coach of the men's basketball team at VUU.

To create awareness about Jaaber and his teammates, seasoned interns gain community outreach experience by promoting the Elite at schools, the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and other nonprofit organizations. Prospective interns who have an interest in working with the Elite don't have to go far to gain access to key decision-makers. Members of the Richmond Elite are constantly engaged in events on the VSU campus. The Pattersons have routinely shared their expertise while serving as guest speakers in Bey's Sport Management classes and, along with their coaches, players, and other representatives of their organization, have participated in additional on-campus activities.

Last year (2015) for example, Joyce Patterson used her team's red, white, and blue basketball to perform a pre-game ceremonial "ball toss" prior to the start of the Men's Intramural Basketball Championship (IBC) game. In November 2015, members of the Elite's basketball and "Crème De La Crème" dance teams made appearances at the Intramural Football Championship (IFC).

The IBC (Men's and Women's Championships) and IFC are annual events that are conducted by Ms. Menjiwe Martin, VSU Director of Student Activities (DSA), and her staff. Martin has allowed students in the Sport Management Program to gain additional experiential learning experience by assisting with the planning, marketing, and execution of each event.

The relationship that exists between the Elite, DSA, and VSU Sport Management Program triumvirate has helped to "bounce" the aforementioned interns and other students to higher heights. For example, one of those students, Phillip Moore, an alum of the VSU Sport Management Program, was subsequently hired by the Elite (community outreach area) after having completed his internship. Person was instrumental in his being selected as one of the top rookie officials for the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) and the Pattersons helped him to become a referee for the ABA. A former referee for one of the aforementioned IBC events, he recently, "bounced" all the way up to the NBA's D-League, where he currently serves as a referee.

Kendrick Wright, a junior in the VSU Sport Management Program, and a former "King" of the Sport Management Majors Club, used his unique skill set to "bounce up" from intramural player to actually making the 2015-2016 Richmond Elite Professional Basketball Team.

Another beneficiary, Jasmine Conyers, former President of the Sport Management Majors Club, served as the "Head Intern" for the Elite and contributed to the presentation of the above-referenced intramural events. The recipient of VAHPERD's esteemed 2014 Frances A. Mays Scholarship Award, she is a Spring 2015 graduate of VSU's Sport Management Program. At present, she is enrolled in a Master's Degree Program at Liberty University and serves as an Assistant Game Room Manager at Alcorn State University in Mississippi.

According to Kinsley and McPherson (Kinsley & McPherson, 1995), students and the communities form positive and long-lasting bonds when students experience real-life situations through partnerships and collaboration. Dominique Cox's and Donald Wilson's constant allegiance to the Richmond Elite offers evidence of the existence of those relationships while underscoring the type of conducive and affectionate culture that the Elite



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has created for its former interns.

Cox, who has been selected to receive VAHPERD's prestigious Graduate Student Award at the February 2016 Southern District Convention, still returns to provide assistance for the Elite even though he has completed VSU's undergraduate and Master's Degree Sport Management programs, teaches at Richmond Prep Academy (Richmond, VA), and serves as an assistant football and basketball coach at Petersburg High School. Cox is a former member of the VSU Sport Management Majors Club and graduate assistant for Martin in the DSA.

Wilson, another former intern, and erstwhile member of the Sport Management Majors Club, offers a similar testament to the long-term drawing power of the Richmond Elite. A graduate of VSU's undergraduate Sport Management Program, and, like Cox, an assistant football and basketball coach at Petersburg High School, he has continued to assist the Elite. Another prime example of one who has benefitted from the professional development opportunities that have been provided by the Elite, Wilson is presently enrolled in the VSU Sport Management Master's Degree Program.

It's easy to see why VSU's interns are having a ball with the Richmond Elite. Chances are if you come to one of the Elite's games, you'll have one too... maybe even one that's red, white, and blue.

For more information, about the Richmond Elite Professional Basketball Team, go to <http://www.richmondelitebasketball.com/home.html>.

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*From left to right: Ricky Barden (Intern), Donald Wilson (Intern), Chevon Miller (Intern), Reggie Tennyson, Former Head Coach, Joyce Patterson, Owner, Leon Wright Bey, VSU Professor, Jasmine Conyers (Intern), Dominique Cox (Intern), and Larry Malloy (Intern).*

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# *Wellness Night: Grad Student & Community Project*

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## **Introduction**

It is a well-known fact that obesity has increased in our society over the past few decades. It is of particular concern that this increased obesity rate includes school-aged children (Alliance for a Healthier Generation Incorporated, 2013). Current methods need to be reevaluated and the implementation of new methods is necessary. In order to combat this particular health risk, all aspects of the community should work together to form a healthier environment. Since children spend a large portion of their time in the educational environment, schools should and can play a vital role in this effort by a variety of means. An example would be an event such as family school community wellness night.

Prior to addressing a community wellness night, a definition of wellness needs to be noted. Dictionary.com defines “Wellness as a quality of being healthy in body and mind together” (2015, p. 1). Health is the wellbeing of one’s self. Health is made up of different aspects; physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social (Georgetown University Student Health Services, p. 1). The authors interpret these five aspects in the following manner. Being physically healthy requires adequate care of the body through exercise and nutrition. Being mentally healthy requires the ability to deal with stress, solve problems, and adjust to change. Being emotionally healthy requires the ability to deal with and express emotions as well as inquires help when needed. Being spiritually healthy is being comfortable with one’s beliefs. Being socially healthy requires the ability to interact with people. All of this falls under the umbrella of wellness.

The authors of this article, as part of a graduate course at Longwood University, developed and implemented a community wellness night in a Title I school in a rural south-central Virginia county. This county has a small population of 15,579. The median household income in this county is \$36,607 compared to the median household income of Virginia; \$63,907. This county has 16.8% of its population that fall under the persons below poverty level compared to 11.3% of Virginia. (United States Census Bureau, 2015). The elementary school has an enrollment of 291 students in grades ranging from one through four. Students that are eligible for free or reduced price lunch are about 196 students (67%) compared to the state average of 33%. Class sizes at this elementary school seem to average about fifteen students. Fifty-two percent of the students are male and 48% of the students are female. The ethnicity percentages on the school are broken down as follows: 51% White, 40% African American, 5% Hispanic, 3% Multiracial, and less than 1% are Asian/Pacific Islander. (School Directory Information, 2015).

## **Background**

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation (2013), reminds us that the percentage of children aged 6–11 years in the United States who were obese increased from 7% in 1980 to nearly 18% in 2012 (the latest for gathering such information). This increase could possibly be a result of the added amount of a student’s sedentary life style choices children are making today. For example the average American 8-to-18 years old play video games for 13.2 hours per week. To counter this growing trend all schools need to provide opportunities for students to learn about and practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. This can be done in both the traditional classroom and in the health and physical education classrooms. It is well known that students with better nutrition have improved attention spans and better class participation. Higher levels of physical activity can relate to higher self-esteem and lower levels of anxiety and stress as well as impact cognitive skills, enhanced concentration and attention, and academic behavior—all of which are associated with improved academic performance (Alliance for a Healthier Generation, 2013).

A community wellness night should focus on all aspects of wellness. The organizers of this event in south central Virginia, the graduate students in health and physical education, wanted to avoid people focusing on just one or two aspects of wellness and neglecting the others. As alluded to previously, a very important point to be remembered is that community wellness nights benefit more than just the student. All parties involved are affected positively by a family community wellness night. This includes the parents, students, siblings, community, school, and school employees. The wellness night exposes the participants to new activities and ideas that can be implemented at home with the family. This includes activities such as yoga or hula hooping. Nutrition facts and recipes distributed at the event can be tried at home. Physical activity results in a release of endorphins which cause people to have better moods (Kovar et al, 2004). Both the activities and the nutrition information promote communication and interaction—which is important at home amongst family members. A family wellness night is a perfect time to bring the obesity epidemic into light. A wellness night can be used to show what could happen if our society does not improve as well as what could happen if our society does improve. The previous facts and statistics—or one’s very similar for other locations, may be the wake-up call that community members need to start making better life choices that affect their wellbeing.

Promoting wellness could reach the community and could posi-

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tively influence the community to take action. Such action could include events and activities such as organized running events; potluck dinners (with healthy food), blood drives, food banks, etc. can help improve the community's wellness as a whole. Finally, the school and school employees will benefit from a family wellness night. The teachers should be encouraged to attend the event and participate with their students. The teachers might get a better understanding about the importance of nutrition, physical activity, relieving stress, etc. With the new information obtained from the wellness night, they could do cross curricular activities in their classroom that stress learning about health. The teachers could also start a campaign to provide the students with healthier food or snacks while they are in school. A family wellness night can and most likely will benefit many people across all ages, genders, and socioeconomic classes.

### **Methods for Conducting the Wellness Night**

In order to conduct a successful Wellness Night, there are several steps to follow to ensure that the night runs smoothly. Overall, the leaders of the event should be well organized and have all planning components written down in order to refer to as the event nears. The first step is deciding when the Wellness Night should be held and at what time would be the most beneficial. The authors suggest that a list of dates should be compiled and then presented to the principal or other school officials for verification. Once a date is agreed upon, it is best to decide upon a time in the same meeting. Locations such as the gym and cafeteria should then be reserved for the use of the Wellness Night so there are no conflicts in scheduling. This is true because of the many events that will occur in these locations.

Once the foundation has been set, it is time to begin to plan the overall layout of the night. This includes activities, vendors, promotions, food or snacks, and the time schedule for the night. The authors chose activities that would be best for the amount of space available, equipment available, and the number of volunteers that could be obtained. Essentially, any safe activities that promote healthy behaviors can be included. Activities that were included by the authors in their wellness night were physical fitness (hula hooping), nutrition (food sorting), and social wellness (family interactions).

Vendors were also brought in to provide information on health and wellness topics. For example, local police officers, nurses, and various other health care personnel participated and had brochures on hand to pass out to adults. Local food and retail stores were contacted as well as the university to see if they would be willing to donate items as prizes for the students who attended the event. Other donators may include the Red Cross, the Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts.

In the case of the authors, promoting the wellness night was relatively easy since two of the graduate students were completing their internships in the schools invited to the wellness night. If this is not the case, promotion can be done from within the school by physical education teachers, classroom teachers, the principal, and other school personnel. In this case, being in the schools on a daily basis allowed for the interns to remind the students of the night and all of the exciting opportunities they would have if they attended. Flyers were sent home a week and a half prior to the event.

In order to draw more people to attend the night, the graduate students decided that providing food would be a natural incentive. During the early stages of planning the organizers wavered between providing healthy snacks such as bananas, apples, granola bars, and water or having sub sandwiches. The group was fortunate enough to have the PTA take part in the event and be willing to pay for the food.

The final and most challenging step was to plan the time frame of the event. In the graduate students' case, the early planning stages time frame looked completely different than it did the day of the event. During this part of the planning, one must be flexible and willing to work around any unforeseen conflicts. The majority of the time for the event was allotted to participating in activities and speaking with vendors. Since food and prizes were a main incentive, the graduate students wanted to wait until the end portion of the evening to serve and handout those prizes. Prizes included donated gift cards, window decals, and athletic apparel/ sport memorabilia from the local university. All of the students left with a prize.

### **Limitations**

The limitations and problems that occurred throughout the experience arose in four major categories; money, communication, resources, and school support. When putting on a large event that involves feeding students in a healthy way, the financial resources needed to buy healthy foods are often limited in a public school. When considering feeding a large amount of students, looking for support from the PTA and outside businesses is a start. Advocating for support from the PTA is important because this event entails community involvement with parents and teachers. In this experience, the PTA was willing to donate money for the food. In addition to asking the PTA for financial support, the graduate students went to local businesses to ask for support. This way the community is contributing to the overall success of the wellness night and will increase their likelihood of individuals coming. Lastly, it is advised to ask for private donations in order to provide enough funds for this event in case the PTA is unable to fully fund a wellness night.

In regards to the second category, communication is vital in order to have a clear connection of communication with the principal of the school. During this experience, the authors communicated with a third party who then directly communicated with the principal. However, involving a third party can effect communication and cause confusion throughout this process. In some situations, the lack of space or resources may become an issue. During this experience, the school provided the cafeteria for feeding, the gym for large physical activity games, and the library for health enhancing activities. If one is in a situation where equipment/resources are an issue, then asking for loaner equipment from local school systems and YMCAs may be beneficial. This may be tough but asking for help from others may open up more support from other schools to help during the wellness night. Lastly, a coordinator may experience a lack of school support for a wellness night function. In this case, it will be helpful to meet with the principal or school board to emphasize how important community togetherness centered on wellness is. An emphasis should be on the importance of a wellness night and how it could

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potentially be a start of change for a culture.

It is believed that the attendees of the wellness night described in this paper acquired a new understanding of what wellness is through participation in fitness and health activities. These activities provided new ideas for families to participate in physical activity in their own home setting with their children. The wellness night also offered a healthy eating cookbook that was given to all families. The cookbook provided families with healthy recipes that families can cook. In addition, the wellness night provided resources through booths that were set up for parents to become involved with the community wellness and know where to go for guidance in wellness opportunities.

The wellness night created collaboration between students, families, schools, and the overall community. A situation that is beneficial to all. The idea behind having a wellness night was to engage the overall community in wellness. By enforcing the simple rule of children being supervised by parents at all times, the entire family took part in all wellness night activities. As a result, new or refined wellness habits were hopefully incorporated by families in the community. The school where the wellness night was hosted received high praise and an overall consensus was made that this wellness night “was the best school event in the history of the school”.

In conclusion, the need for wellness in the United States is prevalent. This simple but necessary task in creating a bond with the community in living a healthier life style through an informative interaction of a wellness night can be a successful way to take preventative steps in decreasing the obesity rate among children today. As stated, earlier wellness is a state of being in good physical and mental health that is characterized through proper diet, physical activity, and stress relief. The benefits of putting on a wellness night outweigh the work one will encounter during the process of

planning all the steps. Children have an amazing influence on the lives of their parents and community. By incorporating all parts of the community together school officials can take a step forward in leading a healthy lifestyle for children. Once parents see how important living a healthy lifestyle is to their children they will hopefully want to support their child’s needs not only for the child but because it will also benefit themselves. As families start to change their eating habits and activity schedule, it is hoped that more and more families in the community will do things such as gather at the park for physical activity instead of at the movies. This is the type of change that could be possible through the investment of running a wellness night in the local community.

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The Virginia Journal is published twice yearly (Fall and Spring) by the Virginia Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. Deadlines for submitting materials for inclusion in the spring and fall issues are January 15th and July 15th respectively. Manuscripts should be sent to Dr. Michael Moore, TVJ editor, by email in an attached WORD document. Each e-mail attachment should not be greater than 4 MB. In submitting a manuscript, the author affirms that it has not been published or accepted for publication elsewhere, unless otherwise stated in writing.

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American Dietetic Association. (1999). Dietary guidance for healthy children aged 2 to 11 years. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 99, 93-101.

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