



Photo by Kendra Lolio

Roary the Lion, the mascot for the American Heart Association's Jump Rope for Heart program, greeted Washington Oak Elementary students on their way into school Wednesday to congratulate them on raising \$5,500.

Roaring for heart health

Washington Oak Elementary School students raise more than \$5,500 for the American Heart Association

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COVENTRY — After raising more than \$5,500 for the American Heart Association, the students at Washington Oak Elementary School were treated to a surprise visit by Jump Rope for Heart Mascot “Roary the Lion” Wednesday morning on their way into school.

Faculty and students in grades pre-K through 5 as well as family and friends helped to raise the money. They surpassed their goal by more than \$1,500. The work took place at home, in the classroom and in gym class when the students participated in jump rope sessions. Teachers implemented heart health awareness activities in the student's day-to-day work, in part to help

them understand what they were fundraising for, but also to educate them about a heart-healthy lifestyle and eating habits.

The school kept track of their fundraising with a meter on a bulletin board by the front entrance of the building which reads “Give a Roar for Heart Health.” It also has healthy suggestions, like reminding students to drink more water and to say no to tobacco. The fundraising meter has been overflowing since they hit the \$4,000 mark around Valentine's Day last month.

“As an incentive if they surpassed the goal Roary the Lion would come in for a visit,” said Physical Education Teacher Christopher Lancot, who was brave enough to wear the costume. Jamie Swanson, also a P.E. teacher at the school, planned to try on the costume

later in the day.

Roary greeted students as they got off their buses and entered the school before making stops in numerous classrooms to thank the students for their hard work. Although some of the older students could not be fooled by the ruse and recognized Lancot's voice, everyone who crossed his path got an enthusiastic high-five and an ear-to-ear smile.

Students began fundraising at the end of January, and the effort became a friendly competition among classmates. Fifth grade student Taylor Maluk was able to raise an impressive \$1,000 toward the school's fundraising efforts, helping to earn Washington Oak some free physical education equipment and tools that all students will benefit from during P.E.

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Roary the Lion smiles with Taylor Maluk, who was the school's top earner with \$1,000.

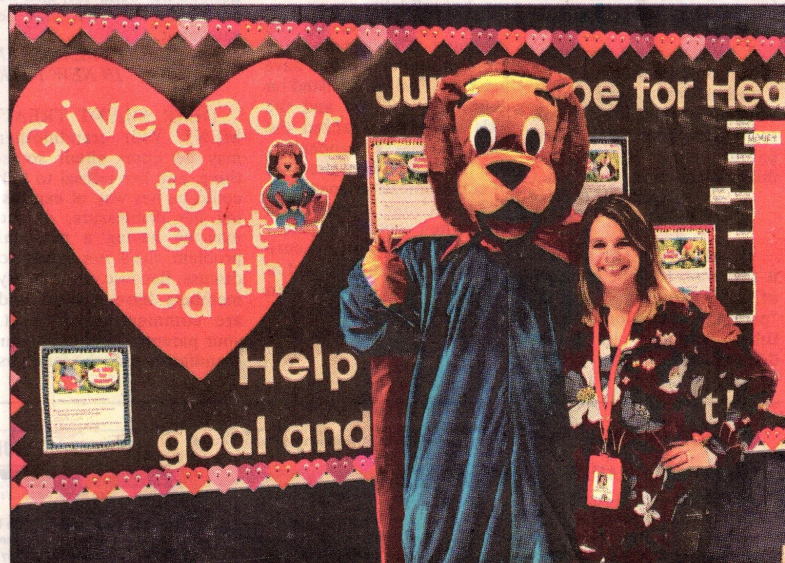
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Above: Roary the Lion gives a student a high-five.

Right: Roary the Lion and Principal Christine Mandese smile for a photo in front of the bulletin board.

Photos by Kendra Lolio



Heart

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The Jump Rope for Heart program run by the American Heart Association is designed to help students give back to the community while developing an awareness of heart-healthy habits like staying physically active through fun activities such as jumping rope. Students learn the value of community service and fundraising for a good cause.

The American Heart Association uses the funds

from fundraisers like the one at Washington Oak to provide public health education through things like CPR training, promoting healthy lifestyle choices, and providing science-based treatment guidelines to help doctors provide better care to patients. The organization also educates lawmakers and public officials to advocate for the protection and improvement of community health.

Washington Oak is no stranger to fundraising events. On Tuesday Principal Christine Mandese announced that the school raised \$1,286 for the school library at the Barnes & Noble Book Fair.

"We couldn't have done it

without the help of all our volunteers, Barnes & Noble staff, and all our wonderful families, teachers and staff who come out to support this event," she said.

They will also be taking on another fundraising challenge starting this week with their annual Pennies for Patients drive to benefit the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. They will be collecting pennies through Friday, March 24. If they are able to meet their \$3,000 goal for the drive Mandese has agreed to allow 3 lucky children from each class a chance to throw a whipped cream pie at her as a reward.

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