

Body Trek: A Journey Through Me

Lois Alexander, patient education coordinator, Comprehensive Health Education Center for Kids, leads children from Rocky Ridge Elementary through "Body Trek: A Journey Through Me." The unique mobile health education center officially opened to the public at a news conference during the Hospital's annual holiday fund raiser, the Festival of Trees.

When it comes to children, The Children's Hospital of Alabama (TCHA) gets involved. And, for a year and a half, TCHA has been involved in a pilot project designed to creatively educate Jefferson County children about their bodies and how to take care of them.

"Body Trek: A Journey Through Me" is a 48-foot, mobile health education trailer uniquely outfitted with larger-than-life-size parts of the body. There, children who are kindergarten age through fifth grade take a trip through a simulated eye, ear, heart, lung and brain to can see how those body parts function. Through the exhibits and fun games, the children also learn how to prevent injuries, be safe and make healthy choices.

"The whole idea of Body Trek is preventive medical care," says Dr. Paul Howard, TCHA chief of Plastic Surgery and chairman of the Public Relations Task Force Committee for the Jefferson County Medical Society which originated the idea in Alabama. "We want to reach kids before they endanger themselves and teach them how to play safe."

The Jefferson County Medical Society sought sponsors for the mobile health unit after discovering a similar setup in Houston, Texas. "We heard about the idea from a school that was benefitting from a health mobile sponsored by the Harris County Medical Society in Houston, Texas. We decided to do the same here, but make it better. And to do that, we needed sponsors — organizations interested in helping children," Dr. Howard explains.

Children's Hospital was quick to join with the Jefferson County Medical Society, the Jefferson County Medical Society Auxiliary and Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Alabama as a co-sponsor of the project.

"We are delighted to be part of a project that will benefit so many children in this area," says Lois Alexander, patient education coordinator, Comprehensive Health Education Center for Kids. Mrs. Alexander is one of four TCHA representatives on the Body Trek steering committee, led by Dr. Howard.



Members of the Body Trek Steering Committee view a replica of a healthy heart, one of the first attractions in the health mobile. Children can pump blood into the heart to see how it circulates throughout the body. Viewing the exhibit (from left) are: Dr. Paul Howard, Diane Orso, Jefferson County Medical Society Health Project co-chairmen, Jeffrey Baer, Jim Brown and Wallie Carpenter.

"The idea of taking health education directly to schools will enable many children who may not otherwise have a chance to learn about their body and how to take good care of it."

Dr. Howard says the Body Trek steering committee has helped make the health mobile a "fun and creative" learning experience for kids and one full of "appropriate health education and injury prevention information."

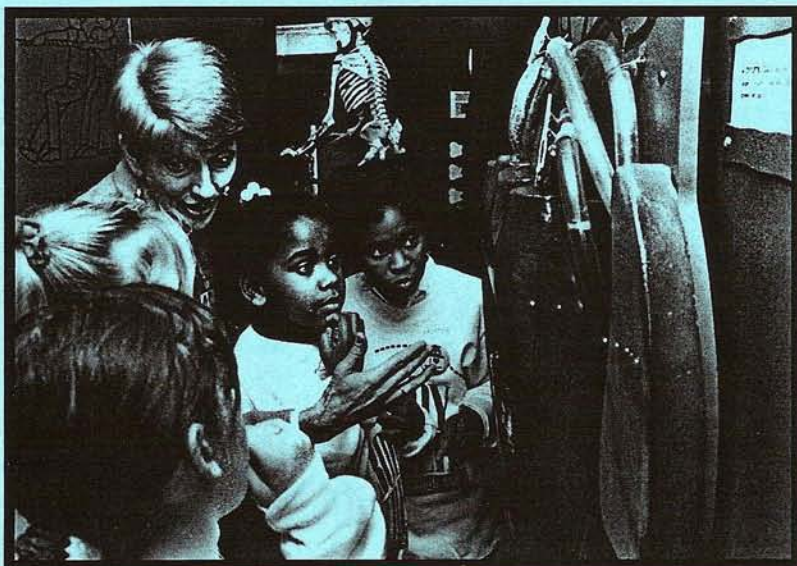
Other committee members include Wallie Carpenter, executive director, Jefferson County Medical Society; Jim Brown, vice president of Public Relations, BC/BS of Alabama; and TCHA representatives Bill King, R.Ph., MPH, Dr.Ph., director of the Southeast Child Safety Institute and Poison Control Center; Mrs. Alexander; and Jim Dearth, M.D., chief executive officer and TCHA medical director.

To help make the unit technically creative, the steering committee hired Jeffrey Baer, designer of exhibits at Birmingham's Discovery Place, a museum of displays which help children learn about different vocations, nature, the environment and the world.

Baer has creatively assimilated devices where kids can be screened for height, weight, blood pressure and depth perception. The kids also can learn about the importance of wearing a seat belt through Baer's uniquely designed car seat exhibit. To help children understand how to make healthy nutritional choices, Baer designed items of food which are neatly arranged on trays next to a body where kids can view the digestive tract and learn how to pick food that is "good fuel."

To maximize the learning experience, five children are led through the unit every 10 minutes by a Body Trek representative or volunteer teacher or parent. The visit usually takes about 45 minutes per group and involves coordination with the school principal, volunteers from the school and a core group of volunteers from the Jefferson County Medical Auxiliary.

The Body Trek trailer is free to Jefferson County kindergarten through fifth grade schools. For reservations or more information, call the Body Trek HOTLINE at (205) 939-6027. ¶



The Clinical Anesthesia Practitioner Award was established in 1986 by the Council for Public Interest in Anesthesia. This Award recognizes the accomplishments of Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) involved in direct patient care, who have made an important contribution to the advancement of nurse anesthesia practice.

Ms. Klein was nominated by co-workers including Anesthesia Department Director Michael Lynn Bailey. "The anesthesia community in Alabama recognizes one name which is synonymous with all that is positive about the profession of nurse anesthesia: Elaine Klein."

In her 33 years at The Children's Hospital of Alabama, Ms. Klein served as chief nurse anesthetist from 1962-1986. She is involved in numerous professional activities including state and national anesthesia organizations, where she has served in various leadership positions. In addition, Ms. Klein organized the continuing education program for the anesthesia department and still does so today as one of four senior nurse anesthetists at TCHA. Ms. Klein holds both master's and doctoral degrees and has sponsored many educational meetings at all levels. She is sought after as a speaker for all types of anesthesia meetings across the South, and her observations on pediatric anesthesia have been published in several state and national journals. The award is a presentation of the AANA annual meeting this month.



Lori Corona, assistant vice president, Corporate Development, is recipient of the **1994 Employee Telethon Volunteer of the Year award**. Lori has coordinated pledge processing for the last five Telethons and always shows "exceptional spirit and leadership skills," according to Telethon officials. Lori has worked at Children's Hospital since 1987.



Merrill Dimick, Telethon producer, received the **1994 Telethon Volunteer of the Year award**. Merrill has donated his broadcast production skills (which help make the Telethon more viewer-friendly) in all but one of our 12 Telethons. Merrill lives in Salt Lake City, Utah, and is director of LDS Motion Picture in nearby Provo. You can read about his strong commitment to TCHA in an upcoming *Offspring* magazine.



larger crowd at the drive in August." (Check August issues of *HighLights* for details.)

The drive is sponsored by The Children's Hospital of Alabama and the American Red Cross. If you are not able to make a donation during that time, feel free to call the Blood Donor Center at Ext. 9215 to schedule a time at your convenience.

Body Trek Wins National Health Awareness Award

Body Trek, the 48-foot mobile health education trailer, is the winner of the 1994 Health Awareness Promotion Award for Medical Society and Alliance-Sponsored Health Education Programs.

The Health Awareness Promotion (HAP) award is the principal award for health education programs presented annually. This year's national competition included 37 entries in three categories with Body Trek competing with 10 other entrants. The winners were decided by a national committee comprised of American Medical Association members.

Body Trek is used to teach children in grades K through 5 about how to prevent injuries, be safe and make healthy choices.

"According to a panel of judges selected from AMA staff, the program stood out as an excellent example of what Medical Alliances can accomplish in their communities," says Mary Hanson, AMA Alliance President, 1993-1994.

Congratulations to the sponsors of Body Trek: the Jefferson County Medical Society, the Jefferson County Medical Society Auxiliary, Blue Cross/Blue Shield and The Children's Hospital of Alabama.

Children enjoy learning about parts of the body through Body Trek, which was recognized nationally for its creative approach to community health education.