

# liveWell

April 2015

"I FOUND MY  
HAPPINESS"

An RUHS Student's  
Rough Road to  
PURPOSE

Kaylin Skinner, 18

Free Zumba  
IS BACK!



LONGER BETTER  
BEACH CITIES, CA

LESSONS IN  
**HEALTH**  
FROM OUR  
**KIDS**

MYTH-BUSTING:  
VACCINES

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A  
"LiveWell Kid"

(Above) Former Redondo Beach High School student Kaylin Skinner opens up about her difficult path to happiness, success and purpose (page 5).



*Beach Cities*  
**Health District**

# Get Vaccinated

Since 2010, we have experienced alarming outbreaks and epidemics of vaccine-preventable diseases like measles. These diseases were successfully eliminated in the United States 15 years ago, but are now reemerging due to unprecedented declines in child vaccination rates. Disproportionately high rates of personal belief exemptions from routine vaccinations in Beach Cities schools are also increasing the risk for local outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases, including meningococcal meningitis and pertussis (whooping cough).

To combat this, Beach Cities Health District has partnered with leading health care providers in our community – Kaiser Permanente, Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center Torrance and Torrance Memorial Medical Center – to spread a clear, united message to parents: Vaccinate your children.

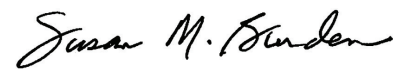
It's extremely important for parents to become informed on the safety and overall effectiveness of vaccines. In fact, only 0.000025 percent of people who receive vaccinations are at risk for serious side effects – 1 in 40,000. In contrast, 1 in 1,000 people

who contract measles will develop encephalitis, and 1 in 10 will develop pneumonia. Prior to the eradication of measles, there were 5 deaths for every 1,000 cases occurring in infants less than 1-year-old.

It is our hope, as well as the hope of our health care partners, that Beach Cities residents will join us in our "Get Vaccinated" campaign on social media channels. United, our voices can relay a louder and more unified message of health to our beach community.

Thank you for your support in this important community health matter. Please encourage your friends, family and coworkers to get the facts on vaccination at [cdc.gov/measles](http://cdc.gov/measles).

Your partners in health,



Susan Burden  
Chief Executive Officer  
Beach Cities Health District



Lisa Santora  
Chief Medical Officer  
Beach Cities Health District

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## Did you know?

Vaccines have prevented 322 million cases of kids getting sick in the past 20 years, according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

# Volunteer Opportunities

See a complete list of opportunities at [bchd.org/volunteer](http://bchd.org/volunteer) or call 310-374-3426, ext. 246.

## Summer Fitness Volunteers

Enthusiastic self-starters are needed for our Summer Free Fitness Series – which runs Mondays (5 – 8 p.m.) from May 11th through August 3rd. Duties include staffing registration tables, checking people in and more! Volunteers must be 14 years of age and commit to at least 9 total summer hours. Interested? Contact Thuy Nghiem at [thuy.nghiem@bchd.org](mailto:thuy.nghiem@bchd.org) or (310) 374-3426, ext. 265.

## AdventureCamp Volunteers

If you love working with kids and want to help instill healthy habits in young people, volunteer at AdventurePlex this summer! Volunteers are needed to help staff AdventureCamp – annually voted best kids camp in the South Bay. Duties include supervising and caring for a group of campers, facilitating fun games and crafts, and helping set-up and break-down camp activities. Minimum commitment of one shift (4 hours) per week required. Application deadline is Friday, May 29; contact Volunteer Services at (310) 374-2426, ext. 246 or [volunteers@bchd.org](mailto:volunteers@bchd.org).

## Front Lobby Volunteers

We are looking for friendly and helpful people to staff our front lobby and greet campus visitors. The following shifts are available: Monday-Friday, 7:30–11:30 a.m., 11 a.m.–3 p.m., 2–6 p.m. A weekly commitment is required for one year. A special shift during the school year (daily 3–6 p.m.) is available for high school students who want to volunteer. Students must commit to a weekly shift for a semester or during the summer. Applicants must be 16 years old to apply online at [www.bchd.org/volunteer](http://www.bchd.org/volunteer). Contact Tara Guden with questions: [tara.guden@bchd.org](mailto:tara.guden@bchd.org) or (310) 374-3426, ext. 120.

## Did you know?

Volunteering is linked to lower blood pressure and stress levels as well as increased physical activity.

## Did you know?

Proper nutrition promotes the optimal growth and development of children.

## What it Means to Be Healthy...to Kids

The dictionary defines “health” as: “Having good health: not sick or injured.” While this straightforward definition certainly rings true, it’s not exactly the way kids in the Beach Cities choose to describe their health. So we posed this question to a handful of local youngsters: “What does it mean to be healthy?”

This is what we learned ... verbatim.



*“I have to be healthy when I drink water ... yeah, drink water.”*

— Lucy, 3, Redondo Beach

*“It means you eat healthy food and exercise. And you don’t throw a fit when you try something new.”*

— Brogan, 5, Hermosa Beach



*“You’re strong and happy ... you’re strong, you have muscles, you eat your vegetables every day when you eat dinner, and when you’re full, you put your dishes in the sink.”*

— Hamylei, 4, Redondo Beach

*“Healthy is eating great foods like lemons and exercising. That’s the only way I know.”*

— Rocco, 4, Hermosa Beach





# A DAY IN THE LIFE of a LiveWell Kid

Elementary school students throughout Hermosa Beach and Redondo Beach are becoming healthier, thanks in large part to LiveWell Kids – an evidence-based health program led by Beach Cities Health District (BCHD) in partnership with local school districts. As school participation has increased—currently all Hermosa Beach and Redondo Beach elementary schools have embraced LiveWell Kids—child obesity rates have dropped. Since LiveWell Kids was launched in 2004, obesity rates in grades K-5 have decreased from 21 percent to 10 percent. Here is a glimpse inside an average day for the more than 4,000 kids participating in the LiveWell Kids program.

## WALKING SCHOOL BUS

Forget the congestion of school drop-off lanes, LiveWell kids hop aboard the Walking School Bus each morning. Alongside parents and trained volunteers, 3,000 kids trek to school the healthy way, following mile-long routes that are carefully selected by BCHD, parents and local law enforcement. Last year, kids in the Walking School Bus program logged more than 45,000 miles and burned 1.8 million excess calories.



## RUNNING CLUBS

Before the first class bell sounds each morning, kids in school running clubs run, jog, walk or skip around the track, logging as many laps as they can before school starts. Laps are tracked throughout the year, and kids who run or walk the equivalent of a marathon are recognized. Some kids complete three marathons in a school year. And parents are encouraged to run with their kids each morning.

## Did you know?

Forty years ago, 50% of kids walked to school. Today, roughly 13% walk or bike.





## 8-MINUTE EXERCISES

Heart-pounding exercises and upbeat tunes greet the student body each morning before they rush off to class. Staff members lead the kids through 8 minutes of calorie-burning cardio, where they are encouraged to move their bodies while having fun.

## SCHOOL GARDENS

Every elementary school has a garden where fresh fruits and vegetables are grown for students to sample and taste. Parent volunteers, community docents and student-led garden clubs keep the gardens healthy and growing year-round. Students visit the gardens for farm-to-table nutrition lessons, to help harvest and to learn about composting and recycling.



## HEALTHY LUNCHES

No school lunch is complete without a trip to the healthy salad bar, which is full of locally grown fruits and vegetables. BCHD subsidizes the cost to help schools bring fresh, organic fare to the plates of local students.

## MINDFULNESS

Every student practices mindfulness daily, learning to live in the present moment, performing calming breathing techniques, meditating and learning the science behind how the brain works to better control their emotions. Teachers complete specific trainings to learn how to administer the mindfulness exercises properly.

To learn more about LiveWell Kids or other Beach Cities Health District programs, visit [www.bchd.org](http://www.bchd.org).





# Finding Her Purpose



By Eric Garner,  
BCHD Communications Specialist

**T**welve-year-old Kaylin Skinner stood in front of her mom and begged for a haircut. But Kaylin wasn't pleading for the look her friends were sporting. Instead, she demanded to shave her long, dark hair off in support of her balding mother, who was battling breast cancer.

"Kaylin came to me with a very sweet and concerned face looking at my bald head and said she wanted to look like me," says Kimberly Surber, Kaylin's now cancer-free mom. "She didn't want me to go through it alone."

Anyone who knows Kaylin, now 18, undoubtedly has their own story of how she has helped them in some way. There's the high school friend who had their electricity turned off, so Kaylin signed her paycheck over to pay the bill. Or the girl without a ride to school who Kaylin would pick up each morning. The list goes on.

But for all her generosity and willingness to aid others, the one person Kaylin couldn't help for the longest time was herself. Here's her story.

## MOVING OUT WEST

Kaylin and her mother moved from Florida to Los Angeles when Kaylin was 14. She left behind her core group of friends, her biological father, her middle school softball team – almost everything she loved or was familiar with was in the rearview mirror.

"It was really hard for me," says Kaylin. "I had to start high school in a strange place, at a new school. It was intimidating."

Kaylin's mother enrolled her at Bishop Conaty – Our Lady of Loretto High School, an all-girl preparatory school in downtown Los

Angeles. Kaylin quickly made new friends and got involved in softball – her passion at the time. But the academics were demanding.

"I have never been good at school. I'm intelligent, but also super lazy if I'm not passionate about something. So I spent a lot of time in and out of the principal's office and on academic probation. I eventually was kicked off the softball team for my grades, which was super tough. It was my outlet."

It was also around this time when Kaylin realized she is gay.

"Fortunately, my mom was completely supportive, and my sexuality never was a factor in my school life, other than an all-girls school can be a little gossipy."

After two years of subpar grades, high school antics and countless trips to the principal's office, Kaylin's mother decided she needed a change

to get back on track. She transferred her daughter to Redondo Union High School (RUHS) for her junior and senior years.

## TROUBLING TIMES

When Kaylin first set foot on the RUHS campus in fall 2012, she recalls being intimidated and depressed. She was at a much larger school, miles away from her friends at Bishop where she felt comfortable and wanted to be. So she protested the move by rebelling academically and socially.

"I started hanging out with the wrong crowd. I had my driver's permit, so people started using me for rides to parties. I was skipping class to smoke or drink with my new group of friends – basically, making all of the wrong choices."

"I felt like I was so far down the wrong road that I couldn't make a change."



Kaylin, age 8



One school night, after a day driving around town with her friends, Kaylin returned home around 11 p.m. She made up an excuse for why she was late, but her mom caught the smell of smoke wafting from the car. She handed Kaylin a bucket of soapy water and said, "Start cleaning the car, you aren't driving it again. I don't know what to do with you anymore; I give up."

Having her mom, who Kaylin describes as her closest friend, throw in the towel was a chilling moment, but it wasn't enough to motivate her to turn things around. She continued to skip class regularly, sometimes sleeping through entire classes, and at night, she ran around town with the wrong crowd.

Her grades were tanking, but her spirits were lower.

"I was so unhappy with myself. I cried almost every weekend and begged my mom to let me go back to Bishop. I knew I was screwing up, but I felt like I was so far down the wrong road that I couldn't make a change."

### WAKE-UP CALL

The winds of change began to blow at the beginning of Kaylin's senior year in 2013. She was called in for a meeting with Senior Class Counselor Tiffany Straight, who told Kaylin that unless she made drastic changes, she would be assigned to Redondo Shores High School, an alternative school. The move would also mean missing prom and, worst of all, RUHS graduation.

But then, a glimmer of hope.

"She told me that if I started immediately and worked my tail off, I could turn my academic situation around. But I only had one year to undo three years of slacking off. I was actually motivated."

Kaylin threw her life into academic overdrive senior year. Some mornings she would come to school as early as 5:30 a.m. to make up missed physical education classes. Other days, she would go from teacher to teacher asking for extra credit assignments, anything to bring her grades up. When she wasn't at school, Kaylin was busy working part-time in L.A. to earn gas money to make the daily commute to Redondo Beach.

"It was exhausting. I felt like giving up all the time. I can't tell you how many times I went to Ms. Straight's office and just cried. But she would always pick me up and convince me to keep going.

"I was on the right track and making progress, but I still felt lost. I had no plan for my life after high school, if I even graduated. Something was missing."

### PURPOSE

Kaylin calls RUHS Assistant Principal and Blue Zones Project supporter Jens Brandt "the best."

"He always saw potential in me that I didn't see in myself," Kaylin says. "He is so upbeat and positive, and you can't help but feed off of it."

Mr. Brandt, who was very familiar with Kaylin's academic and social struggles, suggested she try the new "2014 RU Living with Purpose Series" that RUHS was piloting for students in collaboration with Beach Cities Health District's Blue Zones Project. The group met weekly with Kathleen Terry, who facilitates Purpose Workshops for

### Did you know?

People who know their purpose live up to 7 years longer.

*Continued on page 7*





*Kaylin (center) celebrates her 2014 graduation with her mom (right) and sister (left.)*

the Blue Zones Project, to discuss the importance of living with purpose and how each person has unique talents and interests that support their purpose.

"Everyone loves cheering for the underdog, and I can't think of a better story of perseverance than Kaylin's," says Mr. Brandt. "While she certainly took a circuitous route to finding a sense of purpose, she never lost her authenticity."

During the eight-week series, each participant formulates their "purpose statement," essentially their motivation for getting out of bed each day. No surprise: Kaylin's purpose is to help others.

"Once I understood that helping and giving back is what I live for, it made everything so clear for me. I knew what I wanted to do with my life. It was liberating."

With a renewed sense of purpose and direction, Kaylin finished her senior year strong – with the final exclamation point coming at her 2014 graduation from RUHS. Family members from all corners of the country, including her proud mother, were in attendance to share the big moment.

"Ah, it was the best feeling to get my diploma," beams Kaylin. "It was a wave of happiness, and I'm still riding that wave into my adult life. If I'm being honest, though, I wouldn't have graduated without the purpose series. I really wouldn't have. I think all high school kids should be required to take the course."

Today, Kaylin is working full-time to save money for college – her boss calls her one of the hardest workers at the company. She aspires to become a paramedic and hopes to enroll in a program at UCLA this fall. Kaylin says she's aggressively pursuing all of her dreams and goals, using her newfound purpose as her compass.

She's even sporting a new haircut.

"I finally got the chance to cut off my hair and donate it to Locks of Love," smiles a short-haired, more mature Kaylin. "I wasn't doing much with it, so why not help someone else feel beautiful and happy? It's my purpose."

## ATTEND A FREE POWER OF PURPOSE WORKSHOP

**Thursday, June 4**

The two  
most important days in your  
life are the day you are  
born and the day  
you find out

why.

Fellowship Hall, Immanuel Lutheran Church  
706 Knob Hill Ave.  
Redondo Beach, CA 90277

Registration: 6 – 6:30 p.m.  
Purpose Workshop: 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

**Pre-registration required at [bchd.org/purpose](http://bchd.org/purpose)**

— Mark Twain

# Healthy Lessons

## Adults Can Learn From Kids

When it comes to health, kids don't need to grow up, adults need to grow down. As we age, we experience physical and psychological challenges that children generally don't. This is because many of the activities that keep us healthy are so basic that only children do them. So how do you get in touch with your healthy 6-year-old self? Here are a handful of youthful ideas:

### Did you know?

Laughter may help prevent heart attacks, according to University of Maryland Medical Center research.



**Laugh.** Children have an innate ability to find happiness in everything around them. They can giggle or laugh doing the most mundane activities because they find silliness everywhere. Laughing is like a mild workout – it boosts your heart rate and engages muscles in your face and body.

**Be mindful – stop and smell the roses (literally).** Kids live in the present moment better than any adult on the planet. They live each day to the fullest, without looking ahead or dwelling on the past. By focusing on the present moment, you reduce stresses and can even lower your blood pressure.

**Play and be active.** When we were young, fitness was called play. And we enjoyed it. We ran outside, did cartwheels and climbed trees and hills ... and it was fun.

**Take naps.** Play hard, but downshift and nap when your body is tired. Kids are the best at this. Consequently, they also tend to be more alert and energetic than adults. A short nap (20-30 minutes) can improve your alertness without leaving you feeling groggy or ruining your nightly sleep patterns.

**Hug the ones you love.** According to Ohio State University research, hugging becomes increasingly important with age. Loneliness increases stress and can cause adverse health effects, so take a cue from kids and hug the ones you love ... it's healthy.

**Eat when you're hungry.** Sometimes kids eat during standard meal times, but other times they don't. Instead, they follow their natural hunger cues and rarely eat to relieve boredom or depression. By eating nutritious foods only when your body is hungry, you will prevent overindulgence and keep excess weight off.



# #BeachCitiesFreeFitness

Register at [bchd.org/freefitness](http://bchd.org/freefitness)



**Mondays, 6:30pm**

## **YOGA**

at Manhattan Beach Pier

**MAY 11**

**MAY 18**

**JUNE 1**

**JUNE 8**

## **ZUMBA**

at Alta Vista Park

**JUNE 15**

**JUNE 22**

**JUNE 29**

**JULY 6**

## **ZUMBA**

at Lincoln Elementary

**JULY 13**

**JULY 20**

**JULY 27**

**AUG 3**



### **Did you know?**

An hour of Zumba can burn 350–650 calories.



# Vaccine Myth-Busting

Vaccination is a controversial health topic in the Beach Cities, and throughout the U.S. But are the facts controversial? Not if you ask medical experts like Beach Cities Health District's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Lisa Santora, a veteran family physician.

## **Myth: Vaccines can cause autism.**

Dr. Santora: "There isn't a shred of research or evidence linking vaccines and autism. In fact, the commonly referenced study that attempted to draw a false correlation between the two was not only discredited and discarded, but the doctor who authored the false research is now barred from practicing medicine."

## **Myth: Vaccines are unsafe.**

Dr. Santora: "Only 1 in 40,000 people (.000025%) who receive vaccinations are at risk for serious side effects. In comparison, 1 in every 3,000 people who contract measles will die from the illness. It's obvious the life-saving abilities of vaccines far outweigh any potential risks."

## **Myth: The medical community is divided on the topic of vaccination.**

Dr. Santora: "Doctors are extremely uncomfortable offering permanent exemptions from vaccinations, because 93% of physicians support vaccination and apply them to their own children. The overwhelming majority of the medical community loudly and clearly urges parents to vaccinate their children."

## **Myth: Pharmaceutical companies and doctors make big money on vaccines.**

Dr. Santora: "Vaccines are only responsible for roughly 1.5% of total pharmaceutical revenues – a figure so low that we sometimes experience vaccine shortages because it's not profitable for companies to make them. And there's no green in vaccines for doctors either. In fact, physicians are far more likely to lose money on them."

## **Myth: Healthy kids don't need to be vaccinated.**

Dr. Santora: "The most healthy children or adults can carry a live virus and be asymptomatic. The virus living inside their bodies can then be unknowingly passed on to high-risk members of our community, including the very young, sick or old. As you can see, the decision not to vaccinate healthy kids or adults quickly creates a potentially deadly situation."

## **Myth: Holistic medicine is a safe alternative to vaccination.**

Dr. Santora: "There is absolutely no replacement for the effectiveness of vaccinations when it comes to achieving immunity against specific infectious diseases. The absence of vaccination puts the individual and greater population at risk, and we are now experiencing the reemergence of diseases that vaccines successfully eradicated years ago."

## **Myth: Vaccines contains dangerous levels of mercury (thimerosal).**

Dr. Santora: "There is no convincing evidence of harm caused by the trace amounts of thimerosal historically found in some vaccines. Additionally, with the current exception of a few influenza (flu) vaccines, thimerosal is no longer present in recommended U.S. childhood vaccines."

Get the facts at [cdc.gov/vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines)

## **Did you know?**

Vaccines saved more than 732,000 children's lives in the past 20 years, according to the CDC (2014).



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Health District

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POSTAL CUSTOMER

# A SUMMER TO REMEMBER!



A Beach Cities Health District Program

## AdventureCamp

### June 22–Aug. 28

### Ages 4-12

Mondays: **Arts & Crafts**  
Tuesdays: **Beach Day**  
Wednesdays: **Rock Wall  
& Ropes Course**  
Thursdays: **Field Trips**  
Fridays: **Theme Days**

## THEME DAYS

June 26: Flashback Day  
July 3: Luau Day  
July 10: Western Day  
July 17: Wacky Day  
July 24: Halloween in July  
July 31: Superhero Day  
Aug. 7: Wacky Day  
Aug. 14 Group Color Day  
Aug. 21: Pajama Day

## FIELD TRIPS

June 25: Knott's Berry Farm  
July 2: Bowling  
July 9: Raging Waters  
July 16: Knott's Berry Farm  
July 23: Medieval Times  
July 30: Raging Waters  
Aug. 6: Knott's Berry Farm  
Aug. 13: Soak City  
Aug. 20: Ice Skating



## REGISTER ONLINE!

[AdventurePlex.org](http://AdventurePlex.org)

