

One Life Changed for the Better

The Sight Savers America KidCheck Program is one that could forever change a life. One such story is that of Robert Bates and his experience with SSA KidCheck as a senior at West Blocton High School in Bibb County.

Robert routinely participated in health fairs offered at the school since kindergarten. In January of his senior year, Robert became ill. He was taken to the doctor and was informed that it was the flu. Robert missed 5 days of school as he tried to recover. His mother began to notice a change in her son. After school, Robert would come home exhausted and was difficult to awaken from sleep.

In April 2011, the school held their annual SSA KidCheck event. During the screening, Robert had an abnormal blood glucose count. When he was rechecked after his lunch period, it had sky rocketed. Barbara Terry, the lead RN for Bibb County, rushed Robert to his mother, who was then working at the school. Mrs. Bates admitted him to UAB West where the doctor was shocked to see such a high blood count. The doctor advised Robert to remain in the hospital to lower his blood sugar. After four days in the hospital, Robert was then diagnosed with juvenile diabetes. Insulin was given to control his blood sugar and Mrs. Bates saw the life come back into her son.

Mrs. Bates agreed that his condition had negatively affected his overall performance due to his loss of concentration

and alertness.

Robert is now a student at Shelton State Community College majoring in Commercial Art. Since his diagnosis, Robert is more active. He plays golf with his father and exercises regularly. Robert looks at this as a blessing, without knowing he was a diabetic he would not be taking proper care of himself. Today, he eats right, monitors his blood sugar, maintains a healthy weight, has more energy and feels much better. Of course, there are certain things he can't do and can't eat, but overall Robert expressed, "I like the change."

Diabetes runs in the Bates family. Although Mrs. Bates had taken her two sons to be checked previously, there were no signs of the disease. The day Robert was screened during the KidCheck event, his blood count had reached such a dangerous level he could have entered into a coma. Mrs. Bates encourages all parents to allow their children to participate in the program, even if they have been to the doctor, "I take my child to the doctor, but the KidCheck Health Fair found something the doctors did not find. Be glad that this program comes to your school and checks your children."



Miranda Stiles

SSA KidCheck Event Specialist

Community Partner Spotlight: Karing for Kids

The Sight Savers America KidCheck program could not be as successful without the support from various partnerships across the state. A partnership that has thrived since the start of this program and helped to maintain a vision of healthy, insured children in the state of Alabama, is a community non-profit that began by a group of volunteers in 2002.

This organization, who we owe a huge thank you, is Karing for Kids.

"We all know these students are our future for the community in which we live."

This Blount County based organization seeks "to improve the health of Blount County children, secure health insurance for students not covered by a private or governmental program, reduce school absenteeism, & provide medical screenings to find any conditions that need immediate attention", as stated by Karing for Kids President, Sue Scott.

Karing for Kids participates in eight annual SSA KidCheck events where volunteers come prepared with goody bags to be given out to every child who is screened. Our partnership with this organi-

zation ensures a successful event. Scott explained, "By investing in the health of the students throughout our state, you are investing in every area of their lives and the results will be high academic achievement and self-esteem." With such partnerships, SSA KidCheck events have exceeded the goals originally set for the program. Sight Savers America is extremely grateful to Karing for Kids, and all who have worked towards increased well being for the children of Alabama.

Miranda Stiles

SSA KidCheck Event Specialist

A Note from our Sight Savers America KidCheck Senior Director: Chad Nichols

I am extremely proud to say that the KidCheck Program is thriving as a new department of Sight Savers America. Jeff Haddox, Founder and CEO of Sight Savers America, recognizes that our children are the future of our state and all children in Alabama do not currently have access to even a basic health screening. As Sight Savers continues to be the national model for providing follow-up eye care services to children in our state and beyond, KidCheck is a natural extension of Sight Savers and I applaud Jeff Haddox for having the foresight to lead in making sure we prioritize children's health and children's sight in order to change lives, improve academics, and give each child the best opportunity to reach their potential.



Since the program moved under Sight Savers America in January 2011, we have been successful in taking the program to a new level that we could have only dreamed about a few years ago. The move to SSA has allowed us to write grants to help support the program and to help us to take the program to new levels. We now have five staff members in our SSA KidCheck Department including two AmeriCorps members who are completing a one year service project with us.

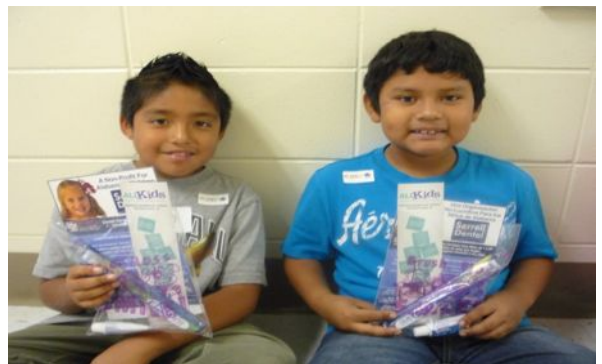
Through the support of the Verizon Foundation and in working with Roenigk Digital Craft, we developed a state of the art software program that is unique to our KidCheck Program and allows our health screenings events to be completely wireless with all data collection occurring in real time. We have named our new wireless program, KidCheck Plus. We have successfully piloted KidCheck Plus in over ten Alabama school systems during the fall of 2011.

Our KidCheck Plus events have been a win/win for our school nurses, our partnering two and four year college nursing students, and ultimately for the children of Alabama. The KidCheck Plus automated system is a huge asset to our school nurses allowing all data to be collected and stored electronically with screening result forms also being automatically generated at the end of each child's screening. Our partnering nursing students benefit from utilizing our KidCheck Plus system as they gain experience in a paperless health system. Most importantly, our KidCheck Plus system benefits the children and their parents by eliminating the paper-based process that slowed down necessary referrals.

As we see the impact KidCheck Plus is having in our schools, our goal is to ultimately eliminate the old, paper-based KidCheck health screening process and make every screening event wireless. This will make a huge difference in our ability to provide follow-up services in a timely manner and allow us to collect data to help us better meet the needs of Alabama's school children.

On a vision front, our children are blessed that Sight Savers America case manages the follow-up vision care for all children failing a KidCheck vision screening. Through the KidCheck Plus software system, the vision screening results come to Sight Savers in real time allowing us to contact each parent more quickly than ever before. With the support of Wal-Mart and other foundations, Sight Savers is able to ensure that each child has his or her best vision possible by making sure each child has a medical home for their vision care and by working with our eye care provider network to provide free appointments and even eye glasses to children whose parents cannot afford it.

One of the things that makes KidCheck unique is our partnerships, our relationships, and emphasizing that one size does not fit all. The foundation for our program continues to be at the local school level and we work tirelessly to make sure that KidCheck fits the needs of each participating school system. We aim for KidCheck to be a strong resource for parents and school nurses as we seek to improve the health of our children. We value all of our partners from the school systems, college nursing schools, state agencies, other nonprofits, and local and community groups.



Nursing Student Shares Experience from Sight Savers KidCheck Events

Through the Sight Savers America KidCheck Plus program, Chris Williams, a nursing student at Wallace State Community College-Hanceville, has faced new, but rewarding challenges reminding him of the compassion and attention required for a career in nursing.

Working with children was not new to Williams, but a new challenge for him was screening young children without their family around them for comfort and security. In this one on one setting, he gained experience not only in performing screenings, but also in what it takes to make a patient feel comfortable.



Chris Williams at Locust Fork Elementary KidCheck event.

Williams states, "Sometimes as a nursing student you feel you cannot give the attention needed to patients when you have multiple patients. This experience was valuable for everyone."

Williams encountered many new "medical marvels" during the events from +4 tonsils to bifurcated uvulas.

However, the encounter which impacted him the most was a young girl who told him, "Thank you for what you do. My mom works 3 jobs to support me and my

little brother. I want to be a nurse so I can help my mom and little brother," before giving him a hug. Williams remembers the encounter stating, "It was all I could do to hold back my emotions. That is what it is all about."

Beyond his personal experience, Williams sees many long term benefits to the program. In addition to alerting parents to healthcare needs, he believes this is a great opportunity for children to be introduced to careers in medicine. He also would encourage other nursing schools to become involved with the KidCheck program by pointing out how KidCheck allows nursing schools to build relationships with K-12 schools, give back to the community, and recruit future nursing students.

Alexa Duchock

SSA KidCheck Event Specialist



HOSA Students Get Involved With Technology and Healthcare

Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) at Crenshaw County's Luverne High School received a first hand look at how technology and healthcare come together to tell a story through training with Sight Savers America's Kid-Check Plus program.

These HOSA students were the first to be trained on the program. Students like senior Donnetria Cole are appreciative of the training they received. "I am very excited about Luverne High School students being the first high school to use the program." Becky



Above: Becky Stubbs instructs Daniel Jones, a sophomore HOSA student, on accurate readings for vital signs.

Stubbs, RN HOSA Advisor, sees the technology training as a valuable opportunity, "It was such a wonderful experience for my HOSA members to be trained in the use of this web-based program for health assessment data! We are so fortunate to be afforded the opportunity to use it in our clinical experiences."

Luverne's HOSA students participated in three health screenings throughout Crenshaw County. Working with Troy University nursing students, they screened 1,051 students.

Alexa Duchock
SSA KidCheck Event Specialist

Verizon Grant Funds New KidCheck Plus Software

This school year Sight Savers America debuted the KidCheck Plus Program. Ryan Roenigk developed the software used for the program. He became involved with the program because he believed it was a perfect combination of things that he valued. First, he explains, "As a parent, I realize how important good health is to each child's future. Learning at any level depends on being present and having the energy to concentrate and participate." Second, was his love for the challenge to design a program that would manage large amounts of data.

Roenigk describes several ways the generous grant from The Verizon Foundation allowed SSA KidCheck health screenings to improve through the use of technology. By using the software system, information travels in the fast paced settings more accurately. Removing paper forms and having all data in an Excel

file not only reduces illegible, duplicated, or missing information, but it also gives school nurses a way to quickly view the data. This results in referrals happening in a matter of days, not months.

He also believes that nursing students benefit from using technology by challenging their critical thinking skills and preparing them to compete for jobs. When student nurses use the system they are asked not only to collect the data points, but also to interpret the data and what it means for each student they screen. Using such a system on Verizon's network, according to Roenigk, prepares the student for technology driven environments they might work in after graduation.

Being associated with Verizon, according to Roenigk, brings positive interest to both Sight Savers America and the KidCheck Department. Roenigk states, "As an international leader in communications, Verizon knows the value of faster access to better information," which is also a key component to

the SSA KidCheck Plus Program.

"I am particularly proud to be a part of the group that brought this system to life: nursing school faculty, school system nurses, community volunteers, and Sight Savers America," Roenigk says, "all of whom have been instrumental in the new program." In direct response to nursing schools and school systems, nearly one hundred features were added to the program during planning and review sessions. He notes, "Even though we expanded the scope of the system throughout the summer, we remained very respectful stewards of the Verizon Foundation grant funds." Keeping the costs of software and hardware low means that more nursing students can be trained, more schools can be visited, and more kids can be screened.

Roenigk encourages all schools to become involved stating, "If just one kid can get glasses in a few weeks instead of several months, it's worth it."

Alexa Duchock
SSA KidCheck Event Specialist



Q & A with Brooke Terry, SNS, Ed. S

Brooke Terry is the Child Nutrition Director for Pike County Schools. She has worked with the KidCheck program for the past four years and now serves as a member of the Sight Savers America KidCheck Statewide Steering Committee.

Q. What role does the Committee play in the overall direction of the Kidcheck program?

A. The committee discusses ways to improve the already successful KidCheck program. For example, the new wireless grant that some schools have implemented this year has been a tremendous success!

Q. Pike County has performed KidCheck screenings for the past 4 years, what is your view on the new wireless technology, thanks to Verizon Wireless?

A. The new wireless technology Verizon grant has been one of the best things to happen to the KidCheck program. The paperless event allows a quicker, more efficient way to evaluate all students. Data is collected and letters are printed to go home to parents the same day as the event. In the past, the school nurses had to go through each student's paperwork and then compose a letter to send home. The data had to be re-entered into the computer for data collection. The Verizon

wireless grant has saved weeks of time and has allowed follow-ups to happen in a timely manner.

"The Verizon wireless grant has saved weeks of time and has allowed follow-ups to happen in a timely manner."

Q. How has the Kidcheck program improved student performance in Pike County?

A. I believe that the KidCheck program provides our students with health and nutrition knowledge. This is the only "check-up" that some students will receive. Height/weight and vision screenings have helped our students/parents become aware of the physical conditions of their bodies.

Q. From your position, could you explain the benefits of working with the Kidcheck department?

A. As Child Nutrition Director, I have worked to bring nutrition and health education into our schools. I will continue to strive towards teaching our students to lead a healthy and active lifestyle.

Miranda Stiles
SSA KidCheck Event Specialist

KidCheck Fall 2011



Number of students screened to date:
14,474



Number of participating nursing students:
1,369



School systems participating:
13

| Date | Event Type | School | School System |
|----------------|---------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| January 23 | KidCheck Plus | Banks School | Pike County |
| January 25 | KidCheck | Russell County High School | Russell County |
| January 26 | KidCheck | Cedar Park Elementary | Selma City |
| January 26 | KidCheck Plus | Frances Nungester | Decatur City |
| January 27 | KidCheck | Edgewood Elementary | Selma City |
| January 30 | KidCheck Plus | Goshen Elementary | Pike County |
| February 2 | KidCheck | Meadowview Elementary | Selma City |
| February 6 | KidCheck Plus | J.B. Pennington High School | Blount County |
| February 7 | KidCheck | Harlan Elementary | Florence City |
| February 7 | KidCheck Plus | Admiral Moorer Middle School | Eufaula City |
| February 7 | KidCheck | Lance Elementary | Lanett City |
| February 8 | KidCheck Plus | Eufaula Elementary | Eufaula City |
| February 8 | KidCheck | Forest Hills Elementary | Florence City |
| February 9 | KidCheck | Wedden Elementary | Florence City |
| February 10 | KidCheck Plus | Eufaula Primary | Eufaula City |
| February 14-15 | KidCheck Plus | Pleasant Valley | Calhoun County |
| February 16 | KidCheck | Byrd Elementary | Selma City |
| February 16 | KidCheck | Knox Elementary | Selma City |
| February 16 | KidCheck Plus | Austinville | Decatur City |
| February 23 | KidCheck | Clarke Elementary | Selma City |
| February 24 | KidCheck | Payne Elementary | Selma City |
| February 28 | KidCheck | Thomasville Elementary | Thomasville City |
| March 1 | KidCheck Plus | Susan Moore High School | Blount County |
| March 1 | KidCheck | Kingston Elementary | Selma City |
| March 6 | KidCheck Plus | Locust Fork High School | Blount County |
| March 7 | KidCheck Plus | Lochapoka School | Lee County |
| March 15 | KidCheck Plus | Chestnut Grove | Decatur City |
| March 20 | KidCheck Plus | TBA | Piedmont City |
| March 21 | KidCheck Plus | TBA | Piedmont City |
| March 29 | KidCheck Plus | Minor High School | Jefferson County |
| April 3 | KidCheck Plus | West Blocton High School | Bibb County |
| April 3 | KidCheck Plus | West Blocton Middle School | Bibb County |
| April 5 | KidCheck Plus | West Blocton Elementary School | Bibb County |
| April 5 | KidCheck Plus | Woodstock Elementary | Bibb County |
| April 10-13 | KidCheck Plus | "Let's Pretend Hospital" | Morgan County |
| April 19 | KidCheck Plus | Eastwood | Decatur City |
| April 24 | KidCheck Plus | DAR Elementary | Marshall County |
| April 25 | KidCheck Plus | Collins Elementary | Scottsboro City |
| April 26 | KidCheck Plus | DAR Elementary | Marshall County |
| April 26 | KidCheck | Lee Intermediate | Mobile County |
| April 27 | KidCheck | Lee Primary | Mobile County |
| May 3 | KidCheck Plus | Julian Harris | Decatur City |

In addition to the events listed in this schedule, we are continually scheduling other KidCheck events and we anticipate having many additional events in the spring. For an up to the minute schedule of KidCheck and KidCheck Plus events, please refer to our calendar at SightSaversAmerica.org

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