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Academy's passionate dedication: healthy lifestyles for AZ youth

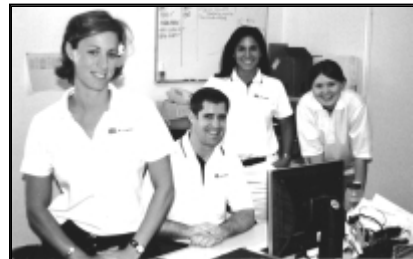
'Reaching at-risk kids through sports:' Darren C. Treasure, Ph.D., Director
By Pete Mohr

AIA HEADQUARTERS – From my long ago (1958/1960, to be exact) active duty as the communications officer aboard an Atlantic Fleet destroyer, I'm remembering this caustic observation: "There's always 10 percent who don't get the word!" Until this writer's recent interviews with AIA Assistant Executive Director Chuck Schmidt, Certified Athletic Administrator (CAA), and Darren C. Treasure, Ph.D., director, AIA Academy (hereinafter "Academy"), I, like most Arizonans, had never gotten the "word" about the Academy, which is quietly becoming one of the most important health-enhancing organizations for Arizona youth.

Never heard of the Academy? Hopefully this article can become one step in promoting public awareness of this important children's health education resource, which receives its primary funding through the Arizona Department of Health Services' Tobacco Education/Prevention Program.

Who initially brought ADHS on-board? In this feature, up-front recognition is appropriately due Creeker Cathy Bischoff, who warmly remembered to Sonoran News, "It took all of us believing that it could be done." (Bischoff left ADHS in July 2004, succeeded as Office Chief for the above-identified program by Ms. Patricia Tarango, who has actively continued the Department's support for the Academy.) Bischoff's "all" includes AIA Executive Director Dr.

Harold Slemmer, Mr. Marty Laurel (Arizona Blue Cross/Blue Shield's vice



THERE'S NO SUBSTITUTE for ability and enthusiasm; and the staff of the AIA Academy has plenty of both. (l-r) Andrea Tyndall, M.P.E., Project Director; James B. Wings, M.S., Educational Programs Coordinator; Michelle Retchloff, Project Manager; Tiffany Roberts, Arcadia High School graduate and summer intern from Santa Clara University. Not available for photo: Kendy Kuczka, Ph.D., Educational Programs Coordinator; Scott Brown, Athletic Director, North Canyon High School, who is the Academy's coaching educational specialist.

president for community relations), Chuck Schmidt and Darren Treasure, who, in 2004, left a tenured professorship at ASU to devote fulltime direction to the Academy.

The Academy's programs were written cooperatively by Dr. Treasure and Robert P.

Pangrazi, Ph.D., Tempe, a Professor Emeritus at ASU and valued consultant to the Academy for its community outreach school-based programming.

The passionate dedication of Schmidt and Treasure is obvious when they volunteer, "Kids are our ultimate goal.

The Academy is structured, through its research-driven programs, to use sports as the vehicle to promote (concentrating upon parents and coaches) healthy lifestyles in an ethical culture for Arizona youth." Treasure smiles when he describes parents as "the most challenging group," but quickly identifies them as "the ultimate resource." This abbreviated resume on Director Treasure, 39, a delightfully-accented native of Bristol, U.K.: collegiately educated at London's Brunel University, he came to the United States in 1988, earning both his Masters and Doctorate in Kinesiology (concentrating upon the "psychology of sports") from the University of Illinois.

Dr. Treasure met his wife, Chrissie, a St. Louisan, while teaching at Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville, Ill.

The Treasures, north Phoenix residents, parent two children, Emma, five, and Jack, eight months. Dr. Treasure is an internationally-recognized expert in the area of motivation in sports and physical activity.

Dr. Slemmer: "We are extremely fortunate to have an educator of Darren Treasure's expertise and dedication as our Academy's driving force. I strongly believe that with Dr.

Treasure as its director, the Academy's potential is unlimited.

The AIA and its board of directors find that an exciting outgrowth of our core program, 'Pursuing Victory With Honor.'" Dr. Treasure explained "CHI-L-D," the umbrella acronym for the Academy's programs.

"Children, Health, Integrity, Leadership, Development." As examples of "Sports Education Programming" and "Chronic Disease Programming," the Academy's principal emphases, he cites two of the Academy's targeted involvements for the coming 2005-2006 school year: "active intervention" in Mesa's elementary schools, concentrating upon the promotion of physical activity and sound nutrition; and similar intervention through offer-school programs at the Boys & Girls Club in Tolleson.

Addressing the latter effort, Dr. Treasure is already forward-thinking about the potential of having Tolleson High School students involved as mentors to younger children participating in the Academy's program.

Nearing the conclusion of his interview with Sonoran News, he jests, more than half-seriously, "With the possibility of an overemphasis on academics, my concern is that here in Arizona, we could end up with an extremely educated population, too many of whom will die at 50!" To this writer, the Academy would seem to face cultural and socio-economic challenges that are more than daunting – perhaps even insurmountable. What, then, keeps Darren Treasure and his Academy "team" going? He all but jumps to answer the question: "We believe so strongly in what we're trying to accomplish; and we love the striving!" Sonoran News

appreciatively congratulates the AIA on its adoption, four years ago, of “Pursuing Victory with Honor;” Chuck Schmidt, the AIA’s pointperson in that effort; Marty Laurel for his initiative in introducing Schmidt to Cathy Bichoff; Ms. Bischoff and Arizona Department of Health Services for their early-on recognition of, and continuing financial support for, the Academy; and last, but certainly not least, the dedication and commitment of Darren Treasure and his Academy staff and supporting consultants.

“All of the above” have energetically contributed to an effort that is exponentially beyond needed – and worthy.
