

# AMHSF Funds Trainer Programs in Area High Schools

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**ALTON** – Whether on the sidelines during games or working to prevent injuries during practices, the role of the high school athletic trainer is invaluable to student-athletes and their coaches.

Thanks to the support of the Alton Memorial Health Services Foundation, \$100,000 has been awarded annually to nine area high schools making it possible for these schools to have a certified athletic trainer or on-site medical professional at athletic events. High schools with athletic trainers are able to provide both game and practice coverage.

“There is nothing more important than the safety of our students,” says Dave Jacobs, head football coach and teacher at Jersey Community High School. “It’s absolutely priceless to have a trainer as part of a program, especially for a high-impact sport like football. It’s nice to know our kids can receive immediate professional care when needed. You can’t put a price tag on the peace of mind for us as coaches and for parents.”

The high schools supported by the Foundation include Alton High School, Bunker Hill High School, Civic Memorial High School, East-Alton Wood River High School, Jersey Community High School, Marquette High School, Metro East Lutheran High School, Roxana High School and Southwestern High School.

Each school has direct access to the trained physicians at BJC Sports Medicine and Orthopedic Specialists. Dr. Aaron Omotola, board certified in both orthopedic surgery and sports medicine, and Dr. Janiece Stewart, sports medicine, offer a walk-in clinic on Saturdays from 8 a.m.-noon for all athletes at 8 Professional Drive in Edwardsville. The group also sees patients at Alton Orthopedic Clinic (618-463-7600) on the campus of Alton Memorial Hospital.

Monica Student is in her fourth year as a certified athletic trainer for Jersey Community High School. In her role, she can be seen on the sidelines at all sporting events, as well as helping with injury prevention at practices by working on stretching, rehab exercises and taping when needed. In addition, she oversees a student-trainer program made possible by the Foundation.

“There are so many schools that don’t have an athletic trainer,” Student says. “It’s really awesome that we have the support of the hospital and its Foundation. It has also helped make our student-trainer program possible, which has grown from two students my first year to five this year.

“Working with high school students is a constant reminder of the difficult decisions that they will soon be faced with, decisions that will impact the rest of their lives. I thought it was important to give students the opportunity to have a first-hand medical experience. Because of this program, young people are making more informed decisions about their future and several are choosing to pursue a career in health care.”

Student-trainer Whitney Isringhausen is one of them.

“My grandmother, Alvina Rose Isringhausen, was a graduate of the Alton Memorial Hospital School of Nursing (Class of 1961),” Whitney says. “She worked at Alton Memorial during the 1960’s in the OB department, so I feel that caring for people is in my blood.”

The student-trainer program gives students an opportunity to gain hands-on experience. Each student-trainer must apply for the program and, if accepted, must attend a sports medicine camp held at the University of Missouri-Columbia in the summer.