



Achievable Dream  
ACADEMIES

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**Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation-Sponsored Wellness Centers Grand Opening at An Achievable Dream**

*Ribbon-cutting ceremony featured local celebrity tennis tournament and a focus on wellness*

Newport News, VA – On July 17, 2019, An Achievable Dream (AAD) and Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation (Anthem BCBS Foundation) celebrated the grand opening of the Anthem BCBS Foundation-sponsored Wellness Centers at An Achievable Dream Academies with a wellness-focused event, ribbon-cutting, and local celebrity tennis tournament at An Achievable Dream Middle and High School.

Local celebrities including Newport News Mayor McKinley Price, NBA referee Tony Brothers, and Christopher Newport University's Director of Tennis and Head Men's Tennis Coach, Eric Christiansen, participated in exhibition tennis matches on Wednesday. In addition, six AAD alumni participated in the exhibition matches.

Distinguished guests included Senator Monty Mason, representatives from Senator Mamie Locke's office, and Newport News Mayor McKinley Price.

An Achievable Dream is a nonprofit organization that partners with public school districts to co-operate schools that help level the playing for nearly 2,100 students in underserved communities in Newport News, Virginia Beach, and Henrico County, Virginia.

As part of a \$65,000 grant, Anthem BCBS Foundation helped to fund Wellness Centers for An Achievable Dream schools. Wellness Centers include exercise equipment and a dedicated, wellness-focused space designed as a resource for school faculty, staff, and students. Anthem BCBS Foundation's support of AAD over the years has contributed greatly to the success of the program,

which has a 100% on-time graduation rate, and 90-95% of graduates continuing on to college or the military.

Wellness is a critical component of An Achievable Dream's model and success with students. An Achievable Dream supplements students' public-school experience with additional resources and opportunities, including many wellness initiatives, helping to grow and educate the whole child. AAD was first founded as an after-school and summer tennis and tutoring program which is why the sport was featured during the Wellness Center ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"We are so thankful for partnerships with organizations like Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation who not only share our belief in the importance of wellness, but are also willing to make a commitment and investment in our community," said Dr. Lee Vreeland, AAD President and CEO.

"We know that for students to reach their full potential, we have to look beyond just the educational aspect of school and focus on whole-health that includes access to health care, wellness initiatives, nutritional food, adequate housing and effective transportation," said Jennie Reynolds, president, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield's Medicaid business. "One of our goals at Anthem is to remove barriers to overall health and well-being, and that includes supporting efforts like the creation of An Achievable Dream Wellness Centers to help ensure facilities are available to help promote the importance of living a healthy lifestyle."

At Wednesday's event, AAD alumna, Sharmane Tonkins, participated in the exhibition tennis match and also shared with the audience: "To me, An Achievable Dream is part of my story of not only surviving but thriving in life." Tonkins, now a tennis instructor at AAD, also shared: "We know that we have to place a high value on wellness so that our students can achieve their full potential. That's why we're so thankful for partners like Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation for taking up this mission with us."

The Hampton Roads Toyota Dealers Association and Virginia Media were also sponsors of this event.

[Event photos available here.](#)

For more information about An Achievable Dream, visit [achievabledream.org](http://achievabledream.org).

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### **About An Achievable Dream:**

An Achievable Dream is a nationally recognized educational nonprofit dedicated to the belief that all children can learn and succeed. Operating schools in partnership with Newport News Public Schools and Virginia Beach City Public Schools, and AAD Certified Academy in Henrico County near Richmond, Virginia, An Achievable Dream develops independent, productive citizens through a Social, Academic, and Moral Education (SAME®).