



Barry Students Reach Out!

Fall 2012 Newsletter

“The ability to think straight, some knowledge of the past, some vision of the future, some urge to fit that service into the well-being of the community- these are the most vital things that education must try to produce.” - Virginia Gildersleeve

Community Outreach 2012:

Barry University's core commitments include knowledge and truth, inclusive community, social justice, and collaborative services. Following these core commitments, the Human Performance Academy (HPA) conducted a series of different community outreach programs. The focus was to create and engage in meaningful efforts for positive social change.

Through the years, research has significantly supported what countless people have known for a while, that exercise is not only good for our overall physical condition, but for our mental health and social values as well. Simply, sound minds and sound bodies create a healthy environment and ensure a better community. HPA has made a concerted effort to become involved in the community by implementing different activities. Some of these activities included helping the youth, adolescent, and elderly populations. The following are accounts of those experiences.

Trapped in Community Service Week at My Daughter's School.

Walking into the 2nd grade class of Ruth K. Elementary to give a bullying presentation made me nervous. I had heard the horror stories from past presenters. The cautions ranged from “you better come prepared on the topic being presented” to “be prepared for anything.” The night before, as I rehearsed one final time for a 15 minute presentation to 162 vertically challenged second graders; I shivered at the thought of presenting a topic that would either come across as too boring, or somehow lost in translation by my inability to connect. I calmed myself and just as I refocused on the task ahead of me, I remembered that my daughter would be among the pack of knowledge-thirsty tots.

The morning came. I arrived at Ruth K. fifteen minutes early and was instructed by administration to

wait in Ms. Delgado's class, thankfully located next to an emergency exit. Walking into the classroom, I had documents in one hand, an eye on the exit and one eye on the miniaturized world that I had walked into. In unison, the little ones all turned and looked at me. Likewise, I stared back. Did they sense fear? Despite having children of my own, the myths about kids began to blur my experiences with fatherhood. For instance, they say that children have an inherent ability to sense fear before they pounce. At that time, I recalled a documentary on the Discovery Channel that essentially acknowledged this fact. Nonetheless, as I scanned the room, a little one smiled at me. Was this a sinister smile? One that welcomed me to the lion's den right before a feeding frenzy ensued? Defenseless, I smiled back. Surprisingly, it felt good. For a fleeting second, I felt that it was going to be ok. That is, until Ms. Delgado ushered in the coolest looking policeman I had ever seen in Miami! He was decked out in his formal blues; his firearm was holstered and gleaming from his side. Faintly, in the background, I could hear his theme music as he swaggered in. There were “ooh's” and “aaah's” from the den. They were impressed.

After him, a banker arrived and then, a reporter from the Herald. I found myself caught in the middle of community service week. But why? First of all, it was National Bullying Month and second, how was bullying going to fit into the organized lineup? The uneasiness began to resurface. I was prepared to give a presentation on bullying, with power point slides, video clips, and in class activities. Now, I have to follow Super Cop and fit my topic within a community service frame. I emerged from my panic when a child bellowed, “Can we hold the gun?” It seemed that Super Cop was finished presenting. I was next.

Ms. Delgado announced my topic and then me. The coolness factor plummeted in the room and was replaced with silence. Ms. Delgado turned on the smart board and the Bullying title page of my power point appeared. For a

split second, I forgot that these kids can read. From the miniaturized crowd a voice yelled, “What’s bullying got to do with community service?” I was trapped, so I decided to confront the question head on. I improvised, ditched my script, and asked: What is a community? Can anyone tell me? The energy level blew up. Hands went up, definitions were given, and for the most part the answers were spot on. Together, we came up with a working definition that involved togetherness, common interests, development, and responsibility. I followed with, “Is a school a type of community?” The earth shook as they screamed at the top of their lungs that indeed, a school is a community. I countered, “So then, if bullying is a problem in our community at school, it is our responsibility to understand what it is, what it does, how it feels, and what we as members of the community are obliged to do.” And so, with a simple question before my presentation, we (the munchkins and I) worked together to frame the message. I delivered the presentation four times that day, the last of which was to my daughter’s class. Each time the presentation was different but the same, and each time the energy level was sky high. In fact, I ended that day sky high as I walked out of the last class and glanced over to where my daughter sat. We looked at each other, and she smiled.



The Power of Imagery.

This community service activity was conducted at Neptune Beach Elementary in Jacksonville, FL. First, we explained the importance of children being physically fit, and that Physical Education class was not enough to meet the amount of physical activity children need. Then we

addressed the topic of technology (TV, PS3, handheld games and more!) explaining how it not only takes away from children’s physical activity but also their creativity. With the permission of the teacher and school, the kids participated in a 15 minute interactive physical activity through the use of imagery. The kids loved participating in the following activity.

“Today we are geologists on an adventure in the rain forest. We are on a search for a rare species. Everybody put your thinking hats on (motion for an imaginary hat to be put on head) and check to make sure your tool belt is tight on your hips (motion this). Now let’s get started (walk in place). Look around, what does everybody see (ask questions about trees, flowers, animals all while walking in place). Do you see that huge tree over there? (point) Let’s run towards it (run in place for 30 seconds). Phew, we made it! (stop running) Who likes to climb trees? Let’s climb this one (pretend to climb making sure that each child is stretching arms really high). Now that we’re at the top (stop climbing) do you see that beautiful waterfall over there? (point) Let’s go see it (climb down, begin walking). Wow, isn’t this beautiful? Can you hear the water as it falls? Who wants to go for a swim? (swim through the air). Let’s climb up these rocks so we can get underneath the waterfall (pretend to climb). Now that we’re underneath the waterfall, can you hear, see, and feel the water (stretch arms high as if standing under a waterfall). Alright, it’s getting late; let’s go find what we came for (swim in air). See that cliff over there (point) let’s run to it (run in place for 30 seconds). Great job! Now, we have to do some more climbing (pretend to climb). Oh no, here comes some rain. Hurry, let’s crawl into that cave (duck down/squat and walk forward). It’s so dark, can anybody see anything? Wait, what’s that noise? Oh no, here come bats (duck down and cover head). Phew, they’re gone. But where did they come from? Does anyone see that light (point)? That must be where the bats flew from, let’s get a closer look (walk forward). That’s not a light, that’s the glow in the dark worm (point)! Look, we found our rare species! Great job everyone! This has been the best group of geologists I’ve ever worked with! Pat yourselves on the back.”

Strength-Exercises with the Elderly.

The proposed idea for our HPA project was to implement a wellness intervention among the elderly population at the Hamlet Country Club. In order to work with this type of population, we felt it was best to work with professionals that had experience with the elderly and the type of routines that are suitable for them.

Therefore, we combined our ideas with a physical trainer and physical therapist at the club and provided help on routines that had already been in use by the trainer/therapist with the elderly that we worked with. We did not have the individuals perform exercise routines that we had first proposed that we had made up. We felt as though it would be better to allow the professionals to guide the people so that they would get the appropriate care and instruction.

Before the people started working out, we asked their permission if they would mind that we briefly talked with them about our project. We felt it was necessary to provide information about the benefits of exercise to the elderly and explain to them how simple exercises can improve their balance and reduce the risk of injury. Although some of these individuals were there by the doctor's orders in order to help with balance and strength to prevent falls and injuries, some were just there to help increase simple strength so they could stay walking because they enjoyed this type of exercise.

After we started this project, it took a bit of a turn from what we were proposing in the beginning. We learned that most of the individuals who were coming into the facility for exercise were those individuals that had been recommended by their doctor to start exercising more due to complaints from the individuals. The physical therapist recommended that the routines selected for this population works best if it is tailored to each client. All the clients that come in have different problems; therefore, it is necessary to learn about how active the person was before coming in and then deciding on a program regime that is suitable for them. Most of the individuals seemed to have problems with arthritis thus the trainer and therapist told us that they can't help solve the problem of arthritis, but that they can only treat the symptoms associated with it by having them do simple strength exercises, such as the leg press. In addition, we wondered how they accommodate special situations and they showed us with a lady who had neuropathy (where she would sometime lose sensation in her legs and feet). In order to help this they used a boot called a "healthlight." The boot uses UV lights to heat the foot up to allow an increase in blood circulation and relieve minor pains. The lady said that it seems to work for her.

During this project we learned that most of the participants would start off their workout by using the cardio bicycle as a warm-up to stretch the limbs of the body before moving on to the strength and balance exercises that would be performed afterwards. When it came to the strength exercises we learned that closed-

chain exercises were better for strengthening of the joints. Closed-chain exercises are those exercises performed when individuals are on the ground and/or their feet are touching a surface, while open-chain exercises are those performed when the feet are off the ground and not touching a surface.

We found it interesting that when working with balance on certain individuals that we could tell whether or not someone was confident in their movements depending on the position of their head. Depending on if they would keep their head up (looking straight ahead) or if they would drop their head (to look down at their feet) we could tell if they lacked confidence or not. Those individuals that lacked confidence in their movements would look down while moving in order to look at where their feet were. We learned that these individuals also had previous problems with falling. We know that falls are a major problem among the elderly population because it can cause broken bones that sometimes require tedious surgeries.

The elderly population is a key population that should be looked at with wellness interventions (with the use of providing knowledge and showing them easy exercises that can be beneficial). If the knowledge was out there about how easy these exercises are and there were people that could guide the elderly through these workout routines like we did with the help of professionals then I believe that the amount of injury associated with this group could be decreased.



Preparation for Higher Levels of Competition in Soccer.

For me, it is important for young kids to be exposed to the proper steps that are needed to make their dreams happen. As a kid growing up, I always had a love for soccer even though I tried almost every other sport. It

was a dream of mine to play collegiate and professional soccer. As I started getting older and playing on more competitive teams, I began looking more into playing in college. There was one problem—I didn't know where to even start to prepare for the process of getting an athletic scholarship. I believe that had I known the right steps to take, I would have been more prepared and possibly had more offers from a considerable amount of colleges. Not only is it vital to know the right steps to take to get noticed by coaches, but also the right steps to stay fit and healthy. If as young kids they can implement this, there is a greater chance they will use this as a daily way of life and not as something they feel they are being forced to do.

My HPA project consisted of me speaking to an under 13 (8th grade) girls' soccer team in Ft. Lauderdale. The general objectives were to give a 15-20 minute lesson on how to prepare for high school, club, and college soccer standards. I implemented the difference between fitness and wellness, nutrition, mindset, the positive effects of physical activity, and risks of injury specifically in female athletes. It was also to enable the athletes to learn nutrition and wellness knowledge and apply this knowledge to their lives, creating a healthier community overall. I also went over how to prepare and train their bodies for the next level of soccer.

This was one of the best experiences I've had. It felt great to reach out to the community and express my passion for the sport and for helping people. I am an Exercise Physiology major and am ultimately striving for physical therapy school so it is my passion to help people overall, but with a main focus on how to be healthy. The fact that I could incorporate that into this outreach was great. The girls seemed to really enjoy it and there were a lot of things that they did not know about and were grateful to have learned. They had a lot of questions ranging from asking me to show them some "cool moves" to how I liked playing soccer in college.

Feeling Stressed? A Palmetto High School Program

As former student athletes we both felt that a presentation on stress reduction and management would be beneficial to the students of Palmetto Sr. High Community School in Pinecrest, Florida. As an alumna of Palmetto and an Athletic Trainer for the school we were able to gain consent for use to do the presentation. We were able to present to the Men's junior varsity and varsity Basketball teams. We chose this group because it is the beginning of their season and that we would not be interfering with any crucial practices as well as we wanted to give the team pointers on how to best manage

their time as the season approaches and they would be required to balance school, competition, practices, and all other extracurricular activities.

This presentation was very important to us because our history of being high school athletes. We both remember the stresses of juggling practice, homework, work and school. We both felt that a presentation to the students would be beneficial to help them with the skills we have learned through our high school and college careers. Also sharing our experiences of being teenagers was beneficial to remind students that the changes in growing up and stress that they are experiencing are normal and tactics they can use.



HPA would like to acknowledge all of the hard work that went into this semester's projects. Although we were not able to address every student's outreach project, they were all uniquely wonderful. HPA would also like to offer its deepest appreciation to all of the programs who welcomed us with open arms. Each program left lasting impressions on each one of us and we hope that our efforts did the same.

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