

Brad Smith Helps Kids Focus on 'What Moves U'



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By [Tim Carlson](#)

After the hit [Brad Smith](#) took at San Francisco, most Jets fans wouldn't have been surprised if he'd decided to cancel his appearance for the "What Moves U" physical fitness campaign at Madison Junior School in Madison, N.J., two days later.

But Smith kept his promise last week to deliver an important message to 300 eager fifth- and sixth-graders from four local public and private schools.

"I think it's very important to get the kids involved in athletics and activity young," said Smith, "because nowadays with so many other options out there, with video games and things that keep them inside inactive, it's important for someone and their teachers to get in their heads and let them know what's really going to help them be healthier in the future and what's going to keep our society healthy in general."

Smith's day started at 7:30 a.m. when he departed from the Atlantic Health Jets Training Center and headed to Madison Junior School. The school's physical education instructors brought out some basketballs after leading the children in their daily warmup stretches

and calisthenics and Smith joined the kids in a game of Knockout, which involves making baskets more rapidly than your opponent to knock him out of the game.

He was humbled as he was “knocked out” by two proud students with quick shots.

He then proceeded to the school’s auditorium where students from Ridgedale Middle School, Holy Family School, Harding School and St. Vincent the Martyr School filled the seats.

Smith took the stage after being introduced by the school’s faculty as well as Madison Mayor Mary-Anna Holden and Florham Park Mayor Scott Eveland. Smith talked about the importance of eating right and being physically active and related the information in a way that’s practical to 11- and 12-year-olds.

“You don’t have to be the greatest athlete in the world or anything like that,” he said. “If you like to dance, if you like music, turn on your music at home, turn up the stereo and just go crazy.”

Smith talked about how much he enjoyed playing tag in the woods growing up. He also talked about giving up soda and fried foods after college and consuming more fruit and less fruit juice.

“I think sometimes the message from adults and parents kind of goes in one ear and out the other,” said Sean Dowling, the athletic director for the district. “Having a professional athlete in here just reinforces some of the lessons that we’re trying to teach here in the classroom.”

Dowling spent a season as a Buffalo Bill in 1987 but grew up a Jets fan. He's excited to have the Jets in his community and told everyone during the assembly that “Even though I spent a year in Buffalo, I still bleed green and white.”

After speaking to the students and fielding questions, Jets community relations director Jesse Linder grabbed the microphone to host a trivia contest with signed T-shirts, hats and footballs being awarded to students who had paid the closest attention to what Smith had to say.

Nearly every hand was raised following each question and a few kids from each school got a prize to take home following a great day.

“This ‘What Moves U’ program is very important,” Smith said after the event, “and teamed up with the NFL, this is a great opportunity for everybody to reach out and be a part of the community.

“NFL players and all athletes in our country have become role models and have become people to look up to. Any opportunity that we have to get a positive image out there is great and I think it will help these kids to be inspired to do something great.”

<http://www.newyorkjets.com/community/article/show/2743-brad-smith-helps-kids-focus-on-what-moves-u>