



Pro Athletes Impact Dropout Recovery Through On-Campus STAR Mentors Clinics

BIRMINGHAM, AL – April 13, 2009 – Where traditional learning environments are failing to stimulate at-risk students, unexpected heroes are stepping off the playing fields and into the classrooms to guide them back from the danger zone.

Professional athlete mentors are not something you typically see in the highlights reel, but these mentors are serious about getting face-to-face with students who are on the verge of becoming another dropout statistic.

Today's youth are starved for positive role models. The STAR Mentors program by Learning Through Sports, Inc. enlists professional and collegiate athlete mentors like former NFL Quarterback Tony Banks (Baltimore Ravens) and former MLB Pitcher Benj Sampson (Minnesota Twins) to steer disengaged students on the path to staying in school and becoming better students and better citizens.

Banks and Sampson represent a growing network of pro and collegiate athlete STAR Mentors who are using their own personal experiences from sports – and life outside of sports – to connect with youth and help them focus on improving academics, character and motivation.

“I remember what it was like to be in their shoes,” said Banks, who won a Superbowl in 2000.

“The future didn't always seem bright for me growing up in a Southeast San Diego neighborhood that was riddled with gang activity. I'm one of very few kids who didn't succumb to that lifestyle, and it's my responsibility to share how I did it,” Banks said.

For Sampson, it was in high school that he learned how to balance sports and academics. “It takes a lot of discipline to resist allowing one to take over while the other falls to the wayside,” he said.

“Today's student-athletes face the same decisions and sacrifices I had to make at their age, but they have many more distractions and temptations that were not issues when I was in school. To reach their goals, they have to eliminate as many distractions as possible,” Sampson continued.

In STAR Mentors clinics across the nation, Banks asks full assemblies of students: “How many of you only come to school so you can play sports?”





In schools in San Antonio, Chicago, Baltimore and elsewhere, an average 75% of students raise their hands, proving that sports and games are motivational for at-risk and disengaged students.

Integrating sports into the learning process to motivate success has become the philosophy for both the STAR Mentors program and Learning Through Sports as a company, and it's getting results.

The STAR Mentors program is designed to be integrated with the STAR Sportsmanship™ and Kid's College® online Math & Language Arts curriculum, character education and sports video games to create a unique, engaging and effective solution. For more information on Learning Through Sports solutions, visit www.learningthroughsports.com or call toll-free: 1 (866) 552-9192.

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