

HARRY vets share experiences with aggressive youth

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Nine youth from the "Beating Up On Bad Habits" community center camp visited with HARRY Veterans on Thursday, June 25, at HARRY Veterans Community Outreach Services Inc., at Parkway Office Suites, 897 Peters Creek Parkway, Suite 102 in Winston-Salem.

The community center camp focuses on providing youth with structured activities that help them to learn how to transform aggressive behavior into positive, constructive and progressive life skills. The trainers/instructors at the camp train and teach the participants the proper boxing techniques and fighting skills. Youth who show progress in technique, skill and academics are selected to participate in boxing events.

The youth from the ages of 8 to 16 were provided lunch, shirts, gift certificates and the opportunity to hear stories from the veterans about their youth and experiences in the Armed Services. The veterans encouraged the youth to stay focused on their dreams of being productive members of the community and not allow peer pressure to distract them from being all they can and want to be. The veterans asked each youth what where their leisure and academic interest. Each youth was also offered the opportunity to be mentored/supported as they worked to achieve some of their goals.

At the conclusion of the camp, HARRY Veterans will visit the camp site, inside the boxing community center at 2500 Old Lexington Road in the Waightown section of Winston-Salem, and identify those who have made extraordinary progress and present them with "Outstanding Achievement" awards and gifts.

Ciat Shabazz, founder/executive director of HARRY, said: "I'm very happy that the youth had the opportunity to visit with the veterans that had/have similar interests of the youth, such as boxing, auto mechanics, engineering, community service, soccer, basketball, baseball and football. The veterans were thrilled to share and had a sense of pride about continuing to serve ... now in their own community."



Submitted photo
HARRY Veterans and youth pictured here are (L-R) kneeling, Alexis "Chino" Ly (Navy); standing, Douglas Ingram (Navy/Air Force); camp youth; Donald Gwyn (Army); Dr. Francis Manns (Marine); Alfonso Boyd (Marine); Milton Wright (Army); Woodrow Haney (Army); David Villada (Camp Director); and James Perez (Camp Volunteer Instructor).



Photo by Craig T. Greenlee
Chris Young gets immense satisfaction in helping youngsters develop through his gymnastics program based in Kernersville.

HAMBY

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Lately, however, there are signs of better things to come. Entering the final week of June, San Antonio ended its drought and won two games in a row. The first win came at home against Phoenix (76-71) and Hamby had a superlative effort on the boards and pulled down a game-high 14 rebounds.

"We have a young team," said Hamby, who is the Deacons' all-time leader in points and rebounds. "We're growing and we're learning. This is a good situation for me because of all the help and support I get from my coaches and teammates. I'm just trying to be consistent in every facet of the game. Whatever it takes to win - scoring, rebounding, playing defense, setting



Hamby



Hughes

picks - that's what I'm willing to do."

Although Hamby finds herself matched up against the league's top perimeter players as a defender, she's still more of an inside player on offense. That doesn't mean that Hamby's offensive output is restricted to the post area. In due time, Hughes explained, Hamby will emerge as a versatile swing player who can score in a variety of ways.

"Right now, De's comfort level is inside," said Hughes. "She has that ability to face the basket and go around people. Her game will expand from the inside/out as she grows in her ability to play away from the basket."

"There's a lot more for her to learn, but she'll handle it because she's an excellent student of the game. De has performed like I thought she would."

Warcats

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entire game.

"Defense is our offense," he said. "If our defense is going well, it makes things run a lot smoother offensively."

Although the Lady Warcats play well in an up-tempo game, Geter believes it's inaccurate to label his team as run-and-gun. The Lady Warcats, he explained, are at their best when they spread the floor and share the basketball. "The main key is to keep the ball moving and cut to the basket," he said. "When you do that consistently, you play more efficiently and you get better shots."

Chevena Pickard leads the way for Winston-Salem with a team-high 14.8 points per game. Pickard, a 5-foot-6 guard who played at Greensboro College, commands attention from opposition as an on-the-money contributor. This season, she's shooting 54.9 percent from the field and an eye-popping 81 percent from 3-point distance (17-of-21).

In recent weeks, Adrienne Terrell, another former Greensboro College player, has played well at point guard. Terrell averages 8.7 points a game and has hit 40.7 percent of her 3-point shot attempts.

Vontisha Woods, formerly of Winston-Salem State, has emerged as the team's stabilizing influence. Woods, a 5-foot-11 forward, averages 12.4 points and 5.7 rebounds.

"Whatever the team needs - points, rebounds, defense - she provides," said Geter. "Having a player like Vontisha on your team is like having a coach on the floor. She's the glue that keeps everything together."

Paris Alston, a 6-foot-2 power forward/center who played at South Carolina State, has developed as a reliable contributor in the paint (7.4 points, 4.5 rebounds).

In her first season with the Lady Warcats, recent Livingstone graduate Cierra York has delivered as the first player off the bench. York is a versatile 5-foot-8 combo guard who played at Winston-Salem Prep. As a key reserve, she averages 7.6 points and 3.6 rebounds per game.



Pickard

Lady Warcats notes

The Women's Blue Chip Basketball League, now in its 11th season, is a non-salaried, semi-pro league for women. Comprised mostly of former college players, the league provides high-level competition and exposure to pro scouts from around the world. The WBCBL has 40 teams in eight divisions.

Winston-Salem is a member of the Carolinas Region, which includes teams from North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and Georgia.

The Carolinas Region's top four teams will play a single-elimination regional tournament on July 18 to determine which team advances to the league's national playoffs scheduled for July 31-Aug. 2 in Greenville, SC.

Gymnast

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Young, now 42, recently took time out from his coaching schedule to talk to SportsWeek about his career in gymnastics.

SW: You've had your time as an elite-level athlete. Now your focus is on coaching and running a business. Is it all that you thought it would be?

Young: The goal has always been to help youngsters develop into being productive individuals. Our hope is that they'll learn some things that they'll find to be useful in their adult lives. A few weeks ago, I got a letter from one of my former athletes (Dr. Brian Southerland). In that letter he talked about how his experiences as a gymnast continue to help him to this day.

SW: What keeps you primed and pumped about what you do?

Young: The main aim is to help a kid get a full ride (gymnastics scholarship) to college. That's one of my big goals. I have two boys who didn't get full rides, but they've competed in college gymnastics (Blake Young at Penn State and Wayne Conley at Temple University).

My desire is to get a kid to that point where colleges are looking at them and wanting to pay for their schooling. It's a great feeling when they come back to visit and tell me about something that I told them that really helped them along the way.

SW: What role did gymnastics play in your overall development?

Young: Gymnastics kept me off the streets. I grew up in the Cleveland (Avenue) projects and I've seen both sides of the fence. I've seen the drug-slugging part and I've seen the successful part. Every two or three months, I make a habit of driving through the projects with my kids - just to let them see where Daddy came from. For me, it's important to let them know that they need to make sure their grades are right and that they're doing what they're supposed to do, so they can be successful in life.

SW: You've made a habit of giving back to this sport. Why is that?

Young: In this business, we try to make sure

that we give out scholarships to kids whose families are struggling [financially]. We try to make sure that we make it easier for them to do the sport. If it wasn't for me getting scholarships, if it wasn't for Bob Kohut, there's no way I would have ever done this sport.

SW: What are the most helpful lessons you've learned during your career?

Young: The will to fight, the will to continue when the chips are down. There are guys who get injured and they quit. I tore my Achilles six months before (Olympic) Trials and I could've easily said I'm done. But for me, it was all about 'I want to compete.' That was my goal; that was my dream.

I had six months to get ready and I really needed another month to be ready. But I got myself to the point to where I could actually compete. I wasn't in shape yet, but that taught me how to push through. You always try to complete whatever task you put in front of you. It's that will to fight to the end. You never give up.

SW: You ever find yourself looking at your youngsters and seeing yourself?

Young: Oh yeah. We have a kid on our team, Corey Matthews [rising senior at Glenn High School]. I see a lot of myself in Corey. He's hyper-talented and misses gym just as much as I did when I was a kid. But he can still come in the gym and do things that the average kid who comes to practice every day cannot do. I'm hoping that some day, the light will go off in his head. Once he realizes that if he comes in and does all the necessary work, there's nothing that can stop him.

SW: Looking back over your career as a competitor, is there anything you would do differently?

Young: I wish I could do high school over again. Knowing what I know now, I would train completely different. I would be at practice every day instead of missing two and three days a week. And I would work harder. I would change my work ethic.

When I was a kid, everything came really easy for me. Bob [Kohut] told me that I needed to work harder.

SW: Does that mean

you would not have played football and ran track in high school?

Young: I still would do both of those. I wouldn't change that at all. Without those two things, I don't think I would have been as balanced.

SW: What else would you like to accomplish as a coach?

Young: There's always that dream to put a kid on a national team. There's always that dream to send a kid to the Olympic Trials. But we're not a program to do that. The people you see going to the Olympics and competing on the national team are the kids who spend 30 to 35 hours a week in the gym.

SW: So, how much time do the kids at Flip Force spend in the gym?

Young: Our girls and boys do 18 to 20 [hours a week]. Those 15 hours that we don't do make a huge difference. Making an Olympic team requires a big commitment, not only from the kid and the kid's family. It's a commitment from the coach and the coach's family.

I missed my oldest kids' younger years because I was always gone on the weekends for competition. I'm now at a point in my life when I don't want to miss being involved in their activities. I've sacrificed a lot of their time to make sure that I was able to live the dream that I wanted. Both are playing AAU basketball for the first time, so I want to be there as much as possible so I can watch them play a game they love.

SW: Did you ever envision being a gym owner?

Young: I always saw myself as someone who would be the head of a gym. The ownership part of it just kind of happened. I can say I'm a businessman because I work for myself. But I've also been very lucky in the sense that the people I work with and own this business with have been very supportive of everything that I've chosen to do.

SW: As a coach, what gives you the most satisfaction?

Young: I enjoy seeing a kid learn something new. The look in their eyes, the smile on their faces, there's nothing like it. Seeing that look of accomplishment on their face is priceless. That's one of the reasons why I do what I do.