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Ellison will promote a healthy lifestyle for kids

Sole candidate to visit local schools

BY BEN BADEN
STAFF WRITER

Bert Ellison might be the only male student in the Homecoming race, but he is still campaigning as if he has plenty of competition.

"It'd be nice to have competition," Ellison said. "It would make it more interesting, but I don't mind."

And even without opposition, Ellison's advertisements can't be missed. His "B-HAPPY, B-HEALTHY, B-ERT" A-frame sign in the Pit dwarfs all the others.

Laura Sheppard, chairwoman of the Carolina Athletic Association's Homecoming committee, said the size of the board is a testament to his character and energy.

Ellison is running on a campaign to bring nutritionists and other exercise specialists from areas such as Campus Recreation to Orange and Durham counties' schools.

Ellison has worked at the Student Recreation Center for three years, and he prides himself



Bert Ellison, who works for the SRC, wants to take that emphasis on exercise to local schools.

on trying to exercise on a regular basis. His project stems from this commitment to healthy living.

He also has a passion for working with kids and addressing the problem of childhood obesity and the lack of emphasis placed on physical education in schools.

"Childhood obesity is a huge problem," Ellison said. "Any little thing that you can do to get kids active would be a good thing."

Ellison plans to visit schools with other staff members from Campus Rec to teach kids about the importance of eating right and exercise.

"It's difficult to stay healthy if you don't start healthy," said Austin Turner, who works with Ellison at the SRC and helped him campaign.

Sheppard said Ellison's project made him an appealing candidate. "He's obviously passionate about

B-Happy, B-Healthy, B-ert

► Bring nutritionists and exercise specialists to schools in Orange and Durham counties
► Teach children the importance of eating right and exercise to discourage child obesity

► Address the lack of emphasis placed on physical education in schools

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physical education," she said.

His platform emphasizes active living to promote a healthy lifestyle for children by reaching out locally.

According to a survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about one-third of U.S. children are overweight or have a high risk of becoming overweight.

"It's really important to get them started with healthy habits," Turner said.

Ellison said another reason he is running is that it gives him a great opportunity to stay involved on-campus as a senior.

In addition to working at the SRC, he volunteers with a youth group at Chapel Hill Bible Church and is involved with UNC intramurals. He also played for the club rugby team last year.

"I feel like I've really gotten the Carolina experience," Ellison said. "I've gotten a great education with great teachers."

He said being nominated for Homecoming king will give him the opportunity to give back to the University community.

Ellison's friends said he is the perfect person to represent UNC. "If anyone is Carolina, it's Bert," Turner said. "I can't think of someone to better represent the Carolina community."

Another of Ellison's friends, senior Anna Lassiter, said he exudes many important leadership qualities.

"He will be a really good ambassador for UNC because he loves Carolina," she said.

Ellison will graduate in the spring as a psychology major but said he isn't sure about what his plans after graduation are.

"Maybe I'll go overseas," he said.

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

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