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Hoops with Heroes brings local law enforcement and youth together

MARCH 9, 2017



Senior exercise science majors and members of Georgia Southern's men's and women's basketball teams, Dominique Bullock and Patrice Butler, respectively, co-directed the inaugural 'Hoops with Heroes' event on Feb. 18 at William James Middle School under the supervision of Charles "Hal" Wilson Jr., Ph.D., assistant professor of coaching education in the School of Health and Kinesiology.

Approximately 17 local children spent the morning at the event which is aimed at bringing together middle school students and local law enforcement from the Bulloch County Sheriff's Office, Georgia Southern Police Department and Georgia State Patrol Post #45, by using basketball as a bridge to build positive relationships and improve communication from an early age.

Prior to the event, research was conducted on positive youth development and sport for peace and development. The group identified the core values they wanted to teach and created a daily schedule that integrated these values with basketball.

"The activities were designed for the kids to learn about character, awareness and perseverance, which was put into an acronym: 'C.A.P.,'" said Butler. "We wanted the activities to be both competitive and fun."

There were a total of six different activities offered. Three were geared toward basketball, and three were non-basketball related. Participants took part in simple drills, such as passing and dribbling, and competed in a human hula hoop contest, marshmallow toss and blindfolded listening activity.

The event would not have been possible without the Georgia Southern student volunteers and athletes, including the Zeta Delta Delta chapter of Omega Psi Phi fraternity, the Georgia Southern chapter of the National Council of Negro Women and the Georgia Southern football team. Both Mike Yawn, principal at William James Middle School, and Brian Hall, coach of the Williams James Middle School boys' basketball team, were instrumental in recruiting children participants and securing the facility for the event.

Georgia Southern Athletics provided all children participants with free tickets to both the men's and women's basketball games that were played the weekend of the 'Hoops with Heroes' event. Local restaurant, 40 East Grill, donated a catered lunch for the event allowing participants the opportunity to socialize afterwards.

"Bullock and Butler did an all-around fantastic job," stated Wilson. "The feedback from the kids, the officers and the volunteers was wonderful, and several officers have already asked when the event will be held again."

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