



It Bears Mentioning...

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2008

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Bears Share Ticket Donation Program
- Chicago Bears Youth Football Camps
- Miller "Designate a Driver" Campaign
- Family Night at Soldier Field

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Groups at Training Camp 2
- Coaches Bike Donation 2
- Home Team Hand-Off 3
- Gridiron Greats 4
- Play 60 4

Play Football Month



Bears Care presented a \$75,000 check to the Parkways Foundation.

For the fifth consecutive year, the NFL and USA Football have teamed up to celebrate the start of football season with *Play Football Month*. The purpose of this great initiative is to honor and salute the millions of boys and girls who participate in youth football programs across the country and to also promote the sport and the intrinsic values gained from participation. In support of *Play Football Month*, the Chicago Bears hosted hundreds of youth football players at a home game at Soldier Field, made a significant monetary donation to the Chicago Park District in support of youth football, and hosted "Youth Football Day" at Bears Training Camp during the month of August.



The Chicago Bears hosted "Play Football Day" on Thursday, August 21 when they took on the San Francisco 49ers in preseason action at Soldier Field. The Bears donated hundreds of tickets to youth football and cheer-leading organizations in the Chicagoland area. Prior to the game, teams from the Chicago Park District's Inner City Flag and Junior Bear Tackle youth football leagues lined up on the field for the National Anthem and Bears introductions. Several Bears players, including **Mike Brown, Tommie Harris, Adewale Ogunleye, Charles Tillman and Nathan Vasher**, stopped over during warm-ups to shake hands and offer some encouraging words to the kids. The teams returned at halftime when they had an opportunity to scrimmage in front of the Soldier Field crowd of over 50,000!

In keeping with spirit of *Play Football Month*, other pre-game festivities included the presentation of a \$75,000 check from Bears Care, the charitable beneficiary of the Chicago Bears Football Club, to the Parkways Foundation for support of youth football programming provided through the Chicago Park District. Since 1948, the Chicago Park District has offered the Junior Bear program as a safe, free tackle football program for boys and girls ages 10-13. Today, in addition to the Junior Bear program, the

CPD brings the game to thousands of Chicago area children, ages 6 through 17, via its Inner City Flag Football, Nerf Football and Pee Wee division of Junior Bear Football. The Chicago Bears and Bears Care have been proud to annually support the Chicago Park District in their efforts to promote and teach the sport of football to a new generation.

The Bears also hosted "Youth Football Day" at Chicago Bears Training Camp in Bourbonnais on Monday, August 11. Kids were encouraged to wear their team jersey or t-shirt to Bears practice at Olivet Nazarene University. They could also stop by the "Youth Football Day" booth to sign up for a chance to win cool Bears prizes, such as tickets to a preseason game, autographed memorabilia, and prize packs. For more information about *Play Football Month*, please visit www.USAFootball.com.



Teams from the Junior Bear Tackle program scrimmaged during halftime.

Guests at Training Camp



Brian Urlacher signed autographs for Special Olympics athletes.

The Chicago Bears were pleased to host several special groups from different Chicago area organizations while at Training Camp in Bourbonnais in July and August. Athletes from Special Olympics Illinois, families from St. Thomas the Apostle School in Chicago, and over 120 youth football players from the Chicago Park District were guests of the Bears on the Olivet Nazarene University campus. Each group had the chance to work on their own football skills at Gatorade Jun-

ior Training Camp where they were put through drills and a football-based obstacle course before heading over to eat lunch and watch practice from their private seating area. Following practice, Bears players such as **Mike Brown, Robbie Gould, Devin Hester, Adewale Ogunleye, Adrian Peterson** and **Brian Urlacher** stopped over to visit and sign autographs for their young fans.



Mike Brown visited with youth football players following practice.

Special Olympics Illinois was selected as the 2008 beneficiary of the Bears Share ticket donation program.

Bears Share Ticket Donation Program

Bears season ticket holders unable to attend a Bears home game may donate tickets to Special Olympics Illinois through our Bears Share ticket donation program. This program gives Special Olympics athletes and volunteers the opportunity to experience a game. The season ticket holder receives a tax deduction for the donation of the

tickets. Tickets should be received at the following address no later than three business days prior to the scheduled game: **Special Olympics Illinois, c/o Bears Share Ticket Donation, 800 Roosevelt Road; Building B, Suite 220, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137-5860.**



Special Olympics
Illinois



A Community Ticket Donation Program

Coach Smith posed for a photo with the lucky child who received his bike.



Coaches Donate Bikes

Continuing a tradition of community spirit started by head coach **Lovie Smith** in 2004, the entire Bears coaching staff donated a bicycle to one of 23 kids from the Bourbonnais/Kankakee area at the end of

Bears Training Camp in Bourbonnais on Wednesday, August 13. The bikes were used by the coaching staff to get around the Olivet Nazarene University campus.

The Kankakee County Sheriff's Department and Illinois State Police worked with the Kankakee County Youth Inter-

vention Agency to identify the 23 worthy youngsters. The boys and girls ranged in age from 10-15 years old, represented all different ethnic backgrounds and live in different areas throughout Kankakee County.

Home Team Hand-Off



Because of the generosity of 11 Bears players and coaches, over 2,700 children will have the opportunity to experience a Bears game at Soldier Field in 2008. Through the Bears "Home Team Hand-Off" ticket donation program, players and coaches have the opportunity to purchase a block of season tickets and donate them to the charity

of their choice. The charity then distributes the tickets to deserving children. The following Bears are participating in the "Home Team Hand-Off" program in 2008: **Mike Brown** presents "Brown's Bombers" in support of Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago; **Roberto Garza** presents "Roberto's Amigos" in support of Los Amigos de Roberto; **Tommie Harris** presents "Harris' Heroes" in support of Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago and the Tommie Harris Foundation; **Israel Idonije** presents "IZZYz KIDz" in support of the Israel Idonije Foundation; **Jason McKie** presents "McKie's Troops" in support of the Jason McKie Foundation; **Adewale**

Ogunleye presents "Wale's Warriors" in support of the Chicago Urban League; **Lovie Smith** presents "The Smith Crew" in support of Misericordia; **John Tait** presents "Tait's Tots" in support of SEDOL Foundation and Illinois Center for Rehabilitation and Education; **Charles Tillman** presents "Peanut's Gallery" in support of Gift of Hope; **Brian Urlacher** presents "Urlacher's Backers" in support of Special Olympics Illinois, Mercy Home for Boys & Girls, and Maryville Academy; and **Nathan Vasher** presents "Vasher's Interceptors" in support of Boys & Girls Club of Lake County.

Chicago Bears Youth Football Camps



Chicago Bears Youth Football Camps experienced their best year ever...teaching football to over 1,900 kids ages 6 to 14 years old. The non-contact football format

Bears Youth Football Camps reached over 1,900 kids in 2008.

operated in 31 locations throughout northern Illinois, including areas such as Chicago, Rockford, Orland Park, Mokena, Winnetka, Libertyville, Elmhurst, Oak Park and Barrington. The

camp was the "best week of the summer" for many that attended. Led by professional educators and college coaches, kids learned to run, throw, catch, defend, form

block, form tackle and explode out of a stance with proper technique and improved speed. Supplemental instruction was provided by Chicago Bears Heroes such as **Mickey Pruitt, Allan Ellis, Robin Earl, Jim Morrissey, Kris Haines, Jim Thornton, Ron Cox, Al Harris** and others. To learn more about the Chicago Bears Youth Football Camps, visit www.BearsCamps.com or call (312) 2226-7776.

Designate a Driver

"Start Your Game Right, Designate a Driver." The Chicago Bears, Sportservice, and Miller Brewing Company encourage fans to sign up to be Designated Drivers. If you are 21 years of age or older, pledge not to drink alcohol beverages at a

Bears game, and will provide responsible transportation for all members of your group, please stop by a Fan Services booth to receive a Designated Driver wrist band and coupon for a complimentary soft drink. Participants will be

asked to sign a pledge card and show identification to verify their age. For more information about gamedays at Soldier Field, please visit www.ChicagoBears.com/tickets/FanServices.asp.



Family Night at Soldier Field



Teams from Chicagoland Pop Warner scrimmaged at Family Night.

The Bears were proud to welcome four groups of local youth football players to Family Night at Soldier Field on Friday, August 1. Each group participated in a 15-minute youth football demonstration prior to the Bears taking the field for their evening practice. Participating groups included teams from LeClaire Park and Moore Park of the Chicago

Park District's Inner City Flag football program; the Hoffman Estates Hawks and Bolingbrook Trojans from the Junior Midget level of the Chicagoland Pop Warner Football Conference; teams from Jackson Park and LaFollette Park of the Chicago Park District's Junior Bear tackle football league; and players from the Chicago Bears Youth Football

Camps, who were selected as Leadership Award Winners from the local camps they attended. Following their demonstrations, all the players, coaches and their families were invited to stay and enjoy the rest of the Family Night festivities, which included Bears practice and a fireworks display.

Gridiron Greats Unite



Mike Ditka held a press conference to announce a new partnership between Gridiron Greats, and the Gridiron Warriors Alliance.

Rocky Clark, Kenneth Jennings, and Steve Herbst, three members of the Gridiron Warriors Alliance, were special guests for a press event at Ditka's restaurant on Thursday, August 21. The Gridiron Warriors Alliance is a group of five paralyzed former high school football players who have formed an organization that reaches out to newly paralyzed high school players and their families, providing support to help them rebuild their lives. The press conference was scheduled to unveil many significant initiatives that Ditka's charitable organization, Gridiron Greats, is doing to benefit

retired NFL players who are in dire need. During the press conference, **Mike Ditka** also announced a new relationship between the Gridiron Greats and the Gridiron Warriors Alliance. This relationship, which was facilitated by the Chicago Bears, will help bring much needed awareness and support to the newly-formed Gridiron Warriors Alliance. Mike Ditka stated, "It is extremely powerful when groups like this connect for a common cause. I feel privileged that the Gridiron Greats can partner with this group, we look forward to this relationship and the good work we can do.

We all need to do our part, and I applaud the Chicago Bears organization for giving us the opportunity to help these kids." The Chicago Bears have a long-standing history of supporting the members of the Gridiron Warriors Alliance through monetary assistance, practice visits, complimentary game tickets, and awareness. To learn more about the Gridiron Greats organization, go to www.GridironGreats.org or to make a donation to the Gridiron Warriors Alliance, please send checks to **Gridiron Warriors, c/o Kenneth Jennings, 11153 S. King Drive, Chicago, IL 60628.**

Get Up and Play!



Play 60 is the NFL's youth health and fitness campaign. Designed to help tackle childhood obesity, Play 60 focuses on making the next generation of kids the most active and healthy by encouraging them

to get at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day.

The Bears implement the play 60 message through a variety of in-school, after-school, web-based and youth-based pro-

grams—all with an emphasis on the importance of physical fitness and healthy lifestyles. The Chicago Bears encourage kids throughout Chicagoland to...**Get Up and Play, An Hour a Day!!!**