

The Paw Pride Program:  
Using the Game of Basketball to Develop Healthy Self-Esteem in  
High School Girls with Learning Disabilities

Mallory Opiela

Michigan State University

KIN 857

### Abstract

This paper describes a positive youth development program designed for learning disabled girls who participate on a high school basketball team. This program, called, the “Paw Pride Program,” offers strategies, tools, and opportunities for its participants to develop healthy self-esteem. Research has shown that students with learning disabilities tend to have lowered self-esteem, when compared to peers without disabilities. Furthermore developing healthy self-esteem in young girls is critical because it can lead to better decisions later on in life and prevent circumstances such as unintended pregnancy, dangerous relationships, and eating disorders. To promote healthy self-esteem in its participants, the concepts of leadership, physical activity, and friendship are discussed, along with specific strategies and examples that will be included in the program. Healthy self-esteem is something that is very critical to develop in young women, especially if they have learning disabilities; the “Paw Pride Program,” is one way to work toward this goal.

### **Teenage Girls and Self-esteem**

According to the National Association for Self-Esteem, lack of self-esteem affects every area of life. For young women, low self-esteem can lead to poor choices that can sabotage success and interfere with living a healthy lifestyle. Healthy self-esteem ensures success in activities, frees young women to make wise lifestyle choices, and helps them build and maintain relationships (Ray, 2010).

Being a high school girls' basketball coach at a school specifically for students with learning disabilities, I know many of my players have experienced situations that have negatively impacted their self-esteem. Many have been bullied, have poor body image, and have rarely experienced any type of academic success. One of my athletes recently shared this story with me, "I used to be bullied daily at my old school. I was made fun of because of my speech impairment, my low grades and because of my weight. I have experienced this for the past 3 years and it wasn't until recently that I am finally starting to feel safe (Opiela, 2011)." After hearing this story and taking this course, I realized the huge opportunity that I was missing to link the sport they love, basketball, with opportunities and strategies to build healthy self-esteem. I need to provide my female athletes with skills, strategies, and opportunities to build their self-esteem so they can feel a sense of pride about themselves that will, hopefully, lead to them making healthy decisions throughout their lives.

### **What is "Paw Pride?"**

The term "Paw Pride," is derived from the help of our mascot, the bulldog. It includes having pride in one's self, one's program, and one's teammates. Being a high

school girls' basketball coach, I want this sense of "Paw Pride" instilled in my players. I want them to feel confident in their social, academic, and physical abilities. I want to use the game of basketball to increase their overall self-esteem so they can feel the sense of self-pride and dignity that many of them have never felt before. Developing a program around this motto is something I believe could have a positive impact on our female athletes and really solidify our high school girls' basketball program.

### **The Environment and the Characteristics of the Students Involved**

The environment that this program would take place at is a very specific and special one. The "Paw Pride Program," would take place at Eton Academy, a private school for students with learning disabilities. The school is comprised of grades 1<sup>st</sup>- 12<sup>th</sup>, but the "Paw Pride Program," would only involve the high school girls' basketball team which is comprised of girls in the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades. About twelve high school girls would participate in the program and their ages would range from between 14-18 years old.

The most prevalent disability at Eton, and with the athletes involved in the program, is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or ADHD. ADHD is a common behavioral disorder that affects an estimated 8% to 10% of school-age children (What is ADHD?, 2008). People with ADHD have differences in the various parts of their brains that control attention and activity. This may result in difficulty focusing on a conversation or being attentive during class. Boys are about three times more likely than girls to be diagnosed with ADHD, though it's not yet understood why (What is ADHD?, 2008). This fact supports the population difference between boys and girls at our school and why our female student population is only around 36%.

Another key piece of information about the environmental aspects of this program involves the overall philosophy of the athletics program at Eton Academy. The athletics program is open to all middle and high school students and it includes a “no-cut” policy, with a high emphasis on equal playing time. Many of the sports offered are played in an intramural format, where the students play against one another, but our basketball teams do competitively play against other teams of similar athletic ability.

Currently we have over eighty students that participate in our athletics program and, in a school that is comprised of only 185, having around 43% of them participate in some type of sport throughout the school year is a great statistic. Our athletics program offers a chance for all of our middle and high school students to participate in an organized sport system and feel a sense of belonging to a team.

This sense of belonging and open participation is something that is missing from many of our youth sports programs today. Tom Farrey (2008), the author of *Game On: The All-American Race to Make Champions of our Children*, discusses these missing components in his book. He writes, “Youth sport is the most important institution in all of sports because it is where the magic begins, but it’s an institution at a historic crossroads, one in which performance often matters more than participation does. It’s less and less accessible to the late bloomer, the genetically ordinary, the economically disadvantaged, the child of a one-parent household, the physically or mentally disabled, and the kid who needs exercise more than any other-the clinically obese (15).”

### **Why Basketball?**

According to the latest study by the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, basketball is still the most popular team sport among children (Show, 2009). The report, with over 41,000 surveys taken in January 2009, states that 26.2 million children ages 6 and older played basketball in 2008 (Show, 2009). Finishing a distant second and third were baseball with 15 million and outdoor soccer with 14.2 million. Basketball, which has topped the survey since the late 1980s, benefits more than any other sport from the number of informal pickup games and the relatively low cost of equipment (Show, 2009).

The popularity of the sport can also be seen at Eton, where basketball is the most popular sport with over sixty participants and five teams. Currently we have twenty-five girls participating in our girls' basketball program, which includes a middle and high school team. The middle school team has fourteen athletes, while the high school team has twelve. There is no other sport currently in our program that has such a high level of female participants.

Basketball has maintained its popularity over the years at our school and should continue to grow based on our increasing enrollment numbers. Establishing a self-esteem program for the high school girls' basketball team is critical because, as the research has shown, it is during the teenage years that many issues with females and self-esteem occur, so being able to take a sport they truly enjoy and infusing it with ways to build healthy self-esteem, is an opportunity that cannot be missed.

### **Purpose of the Program**

Again, the overall purpose of the "Paw Pride Program" is to develop healthy self-esteem in my athletes with learning disabilities. As a part of this process the program

will increase their leadership skills, promote physical activity, and provide students with opportunities to develop friendships. By doing these three things, the hope is that the athletes will develop healthy self-esteem and become more confident young women on the basketball court, in the classroom, and in life.

### **Being a Leader**

“Leadership is practiced not so much in words as in attitude and in actions.”

-Harold Geneen

Students with learning disabilities tend to fall to the background and want to go unnoticed. They are nervous to take risks because they don't want to say the wrong thing in front of their classmates. They have a hard time self-advocating, and they often feel left out of social situations (What is ADHD?, 2008). Many of these feelings come from experiencing failure in the classroom and many do not know how to cope. One way to overcome these feelings is by instilling leadership skills in athletes with learning disabilities. Being a good leader involves a number of qualities; the most important being self-esteem. By closely focusing on teaching athletes leadership skills during the basketball season, they will see the positive effects it has on their self-esteem and, hopefully, transfer those feelings into the classroom.

So how do you develop leadership skills in athletes with learning disabilities? The first step is to discuss what a leader is, and what it entails. Coach John Wooden, the legendary UCLA basketball coach, is the perfect person to complete the aforementioned (Gould, 2006). Coach Wooden, who for over 27 years led his teams to ten NCAA championships, four perfect 30-0 seasons and was named ESPN's Greatest Coach of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, defined leadership as, “the ability to get individuals to work together for the

common good and the best possible results while at the same time letting them know they did it themselves.” (Wooden and Jamison, 1997) He also stated that it is essential that a leader be an excellent listener, a fair person and be able to earn the respect of others. Clearly defining this for athletes is the first step of introducing them to what leadership really entails. The next step involves a key educational piece.

Once the idea of leadership is introduced and explained, the next step will include small, “Leadership Sessions,” that will take place at the end of each practice for about ten minutes. During these “Leadership Sessions,” the athletes will be exposed to various activities, exercises or discussions to help build their leadership skills. The activities, exercises, and discussions will come from the Michigan High School Athletic Association’s (MHSAA), *Becoming an Effective Team Captain: Student-Athlete Guide*. This guide is provided to existing or future high school team captains of a sport who go through the MHSAA Captain’s Leadership Development Program. This guide provides in-depth examples, exercises, and suggestions for athletes on how to be an effective team leaders and a contributing member to society (Gould, 2007).

One of the exercises included in the guide enables the athlete to identify the different roles and responsibilities a leader has to fill and asks them to look at these roles and responsibilities and identify their own areas of strength and weakness (Gould, 2007, p. 4-5). Another exercise focused on developing both positive verbal and non-verbal messages to your teammates (Gould, 2007, p. 13-14). I understand that this program is geared to educating team captains, but I believe pieces of it can benefit all of my athletes and provide them with the strategies on how to become a good leader.



The “Leadership Sessions,” will last the entire season and will mostly function as a key educational component to understanding leadership. In order to truly understand the value of these sessions, the athletes need to be put into situations where they can put the skills they learned into practice. Examples of ways they will do this include mentoring a player from the girls’ middle school team, as well as, being a camp leader during our summer basketball camp.

The idea of having my high school athletes mentor a middle school athlete is important because it provides them with an opportunity to practice what they learned during our “Leadership Sessions.” This mentoring piece of the program will happen during practices, where both of the girls’ teams share gym time. Once a week, near the end of practice and before the “Leadership Sessions,” my athletes will work individually with a middle school player. They could work on individual skill development, discuss game situations, or just share stories. Having one of my high school athletes be a mentor to a younger athlete provides them with an opportunity to be a leader, like Coach Wooden described. It will give them practice on being an excellent listener, being fair, and earning the respect of others (Wooden and Jamison, 1997).

Another way for my athletes to demonstrate their leadership skills is by having my players become camp leaders at our annual summer basketball camp. Each summer we hold a basketball camp for our 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The camp focuses on developing skills, teaching the concept of teamwork, and developing a love for the game of basketball. The girls from my high school basketball team would act as “Camp Leaders,” and would be responsible for helping the coaches with various duties, working

individually on skills with the campers, and leading various team building and leadership exercises, like the Human Knot game.

The idea of the Human Knot Game came from another youth development program called, *Hoops and Leaders Basketball Camp*. This camp is a youth mentoring and leadership development program, whose mission is to improve the lives of at-risk urban youth through the game of basketball (Berlin, Dworkin, Eames, Menconi and Perkins, 2007). The game would be played as follows: the campers would be broken up into groups of 8 or more, with a “Camp Leader,” in each. They then would have to stand shoulder to shoulder in a tight circle, and each person would put their hands in the center of the circle. The next step includes grabbing a hand of a person standing across from you and each person must hold hands with 2 different people. Then as a group they would have to try to untangle themselves so everyone in the group is holding hands in a perfect circle. You cannot let go of one another's hands and, when the circle is formed, some people can be facing out and some in (Berlin, Dworkin, Eames, Menconi and Perkins, 2007). Enabling my athletes to lead team building activities, like this one, puts them in a position of leadership, and gives them another opportunity to practice what they learned.

### **Promoting Physical Activity in High School Girls**

“Movement is a medicine for creating change in a person's physical, emotional, and mental states.”- Carol Welch

One of the biggest issues that our country is facing today is the obesity epidemic facing our children. According to the CDC Website, approximately 17% (or 12.5 million) of children and adolescents aged 2-19 years old are obese and the current generation of children will be the first in a century predicted to live shorter lives than

their parents (Farrey, 2008, p.79). More and more children are gaining weight because of the lack of activity and poor eating habits they are acquiring. Many of the programs that would provide this type of education, like physical education classes and grass-roots sports, are being cut from state and federal budgets because of unsteady financial times and the lack of money making appeal.

The “Paw Pride Program” has an opportunity to continue to promote physical activity because of the “no-cut” policy of our athletics department. This policy allows my high school girls to participate in basketball and other sports throughout their entire high school career. This opportunity is, unfortunately, not available to every high school student in the United States and is one of the main causes of low participation levels during the high school years. After about the age of fourteen, participation levels in youth sports goes down dramatically and, some believe, that this decrease in participation is due to lack of interest. In actuality, the decreased population relates directly to the structure of our athletic system (Farrey, 2008, p.80).

One report written by Vern Seefeldt and Martha Ewing for the *President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Research Digest* stated that, “The organizational structure of sports in the United States—and not lack of interest on the part of potential enrollee—is primarily responsible for the reduction in participation at age 14 and beyond (Farrey, 2008, p.80).” At this vital age more and more athletes become focused on one sport and the more skilled move on to elite or travel leagues. The question remains, what about the low or average ability athletes, where do they go?

Farrey (2008) also provides his topic in his book, *Game On*, “more than ever sports structure is configured in a manner designed to identify and promote the next

generation of athlete entertainers. These talented children have become the focus of the youth sports system, which leaves few options for the teenager of low or average ability (p. 80).” My athletes fit right into this category. If our program did not exist, many of our students would not be able to participate on other high school basketball teams because of low to average skill level. They would have a hard time finding a team to play on and it would severely hurt their chances of having an opportunity to stay physically active.

Simply having a “no-cut,” policy, though, does not automatically promote physical activity. Athletic programs need to be fun and inspiring to the athletes. The “Paw Pride Program,” needs to provide its athletes with new and creative ways during practices to promote physical activity to keep them interested and excited. The way the program will promote this is by keeping practices active, and avoiding lines and standing around. It will foster a positive approach to instruction, emphasizing what the athlete did correctly. It will emphasize drills, but also small-sided and lead up games. And it will incorporate periods of free time before practices for the athletes to socialize (Weinberg and Gould, 2007).

When they are not playing basketball, my athletes will be encouraged to participate in other physical activities during the fall and spring seasons. To track the participation of my athletes I will create a bulletin board in my office that will resemble a social networking site. When they participate in another sport during the year, they will be able to post it on the bulletin board for myself and other teammates to see. They can comment on other teammates’ post and ask questions to each other throughout the off seasons. If I notice that one of my players has not posted anything on the board during a particular season, I can go directly to that student and try to figure out why they are not

involved in any type of physical activity, and I will try to find one that suits their interests.

Promoting physical activity not only will encourage my athletes to live healthier lives, but it is vital tool that will help them manage their ADHD and other learning differences. Physical activity is a very valued tool and strategy for children who have ADHD. Children with ADHD are often seen as not being able to sit still, focus, or pay attention.

John Ratey, M.D., an associate clinical professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School states that,

“Exercise turns on the attention system, the so-called executive functions — sequencing, working memory, prioritizing, inhibiting, and sustaining attention. On a practical level, it causes kids to be less impulsive, which makes them more primed to learn. The latest news about exercise is that it helps kids push through past failures and attack things they didn’t succeed at before (Exercise: An Alternative ADHD Treatment Without Side Effects, 2008).”

Physical activity needs to be used as a tool by my athletes for various reasons. It provides them with a way to fight childhood obesity, to start living a healthy lifestyle, and it provides them with a strategy to deal with their learning difference. The “Paw Pride Program,” understands the importance of physical activity and it will continue to promote it because the earlier a person develops healthy fitness habits, the more likely they are to continue them throughout their lives (Farrey, 2008).

### **Providing Opportunities for Social Interactions**

“A true friend never gets in your way unless you happen to be going down.”

-Arnold H. Glasow

One of the major motives that children have for sport participation is the opportunity it provides them to be with friends and develop new relationships (Weinberg and Gould, 2007). The girls involved in our basketball program are no different. The girls' basketball program provides our high school girls with an opportunity to come together and build relationships with each other. As I stated earlier, our overall female population at school is around 36% and many of them come from different cities, towns, and counties. It is very difficult for them to develop close friendships with other students because many of them do not live near school, and the only opportunities they have to be social with one another are during after school activities. The girls' basketball program not only provides them with an opportunity to play basketball, but is also allows them to spend time and be social with each other.

Developmental sport psychologist Maureen Weiss and her colleagues have studied peer relationships in sport and have conducted many studies to see what effects they have on one another (Weiss, Smith, and Theeboom, 1996). In one study, they identified positive and negative dimensions in regard to friendship and sports participation. Some of the positives included, companionship, intimacy, and loyalty, while some of the negatives included conflict and betrayal. Another positive facet they found was the enhancement of self-esteem. The study found that certain things friends said or did to each other increased one's self esteem and made a positive impact (Weinberg and Gould, 2007).

The strategies that will be used by the athletes in the “Paw Pride Program,” to develop friendships through sport will include: they will continue to mentor the middle school players, being involved in mix-it up shooting days, and eating together during team lunches. Again, many girls with learning disabilities experience low self-esteem because they feel like they don’t belong, but a strategy to meet that need for affiliation is to provide time for interaction with other girls and to make friends (Weinberg and Gould, 2007). This mentoring piece of the “Paw Pride Program,” as described earlier in regard to leadership, allows the girls to interact with each other and form a special bond that is vital to fill that need for affiliation.

Another strategy that will be used to increase social opportunities and develop bonds between players is allowing them to have a small shoot around time at the beginning of each practice. During this time, athletes will be allowed to warm-up, practice their skills, and simply interact with one another. As small as this may seem, incorporating periods of free time before basketball practice is a great opportunity for them to be social and build bonds with each other. There will also be mix-it up shoot around days, where they have to go a basket and shoot with players they are not that familiar with. To make sure they are actually engaging with one another, the athletes will have to fill out small questions and answer sheets to find out what they talked about. Some of the questions could include, what is your favorite color, when did you start playing basketball, or who is your favorite basketball player? Making my players step out of the box and interact with teammates whom they are unfamiliar with will not only work on their social skills, but it will also bring them closer together as a team.

Another neat feature of the program will include our team pizza lunches. Once a month, throughout the entire school year, we will get together and have a pizza lunch with each other. We will engage in conversations about school, what's going on in their lives, and anything else they would like to discuss. Having this be an all year affair will let them come together, even after the season has ended, so they can continue to work on the friendships and relationships they built during the basketball season. This also includes me, the coach, keeping in touch with the athletes.

### **Ways to Insure the Program will be Carried out as Planned**

Being the developer of this program, I need to make sure that it is carried out as much as planned, but I also need to be prepared that everything may not turn exactly the way it is supposed to be. The "Paw Pride Program," was designed to easily fit into the already existing high school girls' basketball program and be fully implemented next year. Currently, we are a quarter of the way through our basketball season, but I plan on implementing bits and pieces of the program this year, so that I can try to work out any difficulties. The inclusion of a few mentor days with the middle school team, a couple of pizza lunches, and wanting to create the bulletin board to track their physical activity during the off season are just a few of the possible pieces that I would like to implement. Being able to experiment this year with a few of the strategies and activities is a great way for me to prepare for the implementation of the program next year. This will also provide me with trouble-shooting strategy ideas for next year, if a problem should arise.

### **Specific Means to Evaluate Effectiveness**

Designing and implementing this program is only the first step. Upon completion of its first year, there needs to be an evaluation of its actual effectiveness.



The main goal of the “Paw Pride Program,” is to promote and increase healthy self-esteem in my athletes who have learning disabilities, but how do you measure that? Do you look for improved body language, do you see if they are smiling more? The only true way to evaluate its effectiveness is to use select surveys and tests. These surveys and tests will be handed out to the participants of the program and their teachers.

To get a baseline of each athlete’s sense of self-esteem at the beginning of the program, I will provide them with the Sorenson Self-Esteem Test (Sorenson, 2006). This test comprises of fifty questions that ask how a person feels about oneself and how they react to certain situations. If the person taking the test believes a statement to be true, they are to place a mark next to that question. Each mark represents an area of low self-esteem and the more marks you have on the test, the lower your self-esteem is (Sorenson, 2006). I will then provide this test again at the end of the season to see if any improvements were made, and it will help to see the effectiveness of my program.

I will also provide quick surveys throughout the program to my athlete’s teachers to see if they are seeing any improvements in the classroom. Eton Academy is a small private school, where in the classroom there is a maximum of only ten students. Having these small numbers in a class, increases the amount of time spent with each student and it allows the teachers to be more vigilant and notice when change occurs. Some things I would want the teachers to look for include, increased verbal participation, more interaction with peers, increased participation in academic classes, willingness to help others, and exhibiting a “can do” attitude.

### **Summary**

Overall the “Paw Pride Program,” will be a great addition to our school and athletic program. It will provide my athletes with opportunities to develop healthy self-esteem and have an impact on their lives. As a coach it is my responsibility to not only teach my athletes about the game of basketball, but to also provide them with ways to develop life skills. The “Paw Pride Program,” will provide that opportunity and it will hopefully transform my female athletes into confident women.

**Table 1****The Importance of Good Self-Esteem in Young Women****Significance of Good Self-Esteem**

- Having self-esteem means that you believe you are capable of meeting challenges as they occur, and that you have the right and are worthy of being happy.
- Going through puberty is a difficult time for young women. Their bodies are changing, hormones are fluctuating and they must begin to make decisions independent of their parents. Healthy self-esteem allows young women to navigate these demanding periods. (Ray, 2010)

**Consequences of Poor Self-Esteem**

- According to the National Association for Self-Esteem, there is a close relationship between low self-esteem and drug use among girls. Using drugs to ease feelings of inferiority can lead to addiction.
- Eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia often are associated with low self-esteem and can lead to serious medical complications.
- Poor choices resulting from low self-esteem can lead to serious problems such as pregnancy, dropping out of school and suicide. (Ray, 2010)

**Features**

- A healthy dose of self-esteem helps young women to maintain a positive attitude, which aids in a number of life skills.
- According to the Center for Young Women's Health, those with high self-esteem generally find life more enjoyable. (Ray, 2010)

**Benefits**

- Young women with good self-esteem make friends easily and build healthy relationships with their peers and with adults.
- Young women with good self-esteem easily forgive themselves for making mistakes and don't dwell on the negative. They are more likely to stick with projects to the end.
- Young women are more self-accepting than their peers with low self-esteem. (Ray, 2010)

**Effects**

- Young women who have not developed healthy self-esteem tend to be drawn into unhealthy relationships. They often attract young men with low self-esteem who boost their own egos by controlling the young women.
- Doctors at the Mayo Clinic report that women with low self-esteem have difficulty with many relationships. They are preoccupied with themselves and with their low opinions of themselves. (Ray, 2010)

**Table 2****Quick Overview of the Paw Pride Program**

The Paw Pride Program is designed to develop healthy self-esteem in high school girls with learning disabilities. This program will involve the high school girls' basketball team at Eton Academy and it will run mostly during the months of November through February with an opportunity to practice their leadership skills during the summer months.

<b>Main Objectives</b>	<b>Ideas Discussed</b>
Develop Leadership Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership Sessions               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Last 10 minutes of every practice</li> <li>○ Will include activities, exercises, and discussions provided by the MHSAA Student-Athlete Guide</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Mentor of a Middle School Athlete               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Once a week, before the “Leadership Sessions,” students will meet with their mentoree and work on individual skills, discuss strategies, or just talk</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Camp Leaders at Summer Basketball Camp               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Help coaches with instruction, provide one on one assistance for campers, and lead team-building exercises</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Promote Physical Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in the high school girls' basketball team               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Attend practices and games and participate in all other activities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Making physical activity fun               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Incorporating fun and creative ways to make physical activity fun. Includes free time, creative small-sided games, and using practice time to the fullest</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Participating in other sports in the fall and spring               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Creating a bulletin board that will chart the physical activities my athletes participate during the off season</li> <li>○ Bulletin board will resemble a social networking site, where students can post and comment on their teammates activities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Provide Opportunities to Make Social Connections with other Girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mix-it Up Shooting Days               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Once a week during our warm-ups, the players will be required to shoot around with a different teammate</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Mentoring a Middle School Athlete               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Once a week players will meet with their mentor and work on individual skills, discuss strategies, or simply just talk</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Team Lunches               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Will happen throughout the year to provide the athletes an opportunity to get together during the off season</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Table3

**Questions about the Structure of the Paw Pride Program**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
<b>How will it run?</b>	The “Paw Pride Program,” would be run through the athletics department at Eton Academy and it will be led by the high school girls’ basketball coach, Mallory Opiela.
<b>What does the program entail?</b>	The main focus of the “Paw Pride Program” is to provide its athletes with opportunities to build healthy self-esteem by teaching leadership skills, promoting physical activity, and developing friendships within the program.
<b>What is the length of the program?</b>	The program would be infused with the girls’ winter basketball season and will run from the middle of November to the middle of February of the following year. Athletes will be strongly encouraged to participate in events during the off season, which include participating in at least one sport during the fall and spring seasons and being a camp leader during our summer basketball camp.
<b>How many youth would be involved?</b>	The players on the high school girls’ basketball team
<b>What sports are involved?</b>	Basketball
<b>Who will run the program?</b>	The program will be run by Mallory Opiela, current PE teacher, and high school girls’ basketball coach at Eton Academy. Only current Eton teachers are allowed to coach because of our students specific needs. All of our teachers and coaches accommodate every child’s individual learning style. Teachers and coaches are consistent, and provide a safe, supportive atmosphere in which students can learn. Having experienced teachers act as coaches is also a vital part of the program; it really aids in the process of learning for the athletes. Teachers build relationships with them in the classroom, which transfer directly into athletics and it forms a sense of trust and familiarity in our athletes.
<b>What are the estimated costs of the program?</b>	There will be no cost to the players to be a part of the program. The coach’s pay and other expenditures will be covered by overall tuition costs.

### References

- Berlin, R. A., Dworkin, A., Eames, N., Menconi, A., & Perkins, D. F. (2007). Examples of sports-based youth development programs. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 115, 85-166.
- Exercise: An Alternative ADHD Treatment Without Side Effects*. (2008, January). Retrieved December 1, 2011, from ADDitude: Living Well with Attention Deficit: <http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/3142.html>
- Farrey, T. (2008). *Game On: The All-American Race to Make Champions of our Children*. New York, NY: ESPN Books
- Gould, D. (2006). John Wooden: Lessons from a Legendary Coach. *High Performance Coaching*, 8 (1), 1,4,9.
- Gould, D. (2007) (editor). *Becoming an effective team captain: Student-athlete guide*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan High School Athletic Association.
- Opiela, M. (2011, November 21). Why did you come to Eton? (M. Opiela, Interviewer) *Overweight and Obesity*. (2011, July 21). Retrieved December 1, 2011, from Center for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/trends.html>
- Ray, L. (2010, June 1). *Importance of Good Self-Esteem in Young Women*. Retrieved November 28, 2011, from LIVESTRONG.COM: <http://www.livestrong.com/article/136623-importance-good-self-esteem-young-women/#ixzz1fyO822cc>
- Sorenson, M. J., (2006) *Sorenson Self-Esteem Test*

**References Continued**

- Show, J. (2009, August 17). *Basketball still tops in youth participation* . Retrieved November 28, 2011, from Street & Smiths Sports Business Sports Journal Daily: <http://www.sportsbusinessdaily.com/Journal/Issues/2009/08/20090817/SBJ-In-Depth/Basketball-Still-Tops-In-Youth-Participation.aspx>
- Weinberg, R. S., & Gould, D. (2007). *Foundations of sport and exercise psychology*. (4th edition). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. Chapter 22: Child and sport psychology behaviors, pp. 513-532
- What is ADHD?* (2008, September). Retrieved November 28, 2011, from KidsHealth: <http://kidshealth.org/parent/medical/learning/adhd.html#>
- Wooden, J., Jamison, S., (2007). *The Essential Wooden: A Lifetime of Lessons on Leaders and Leadership*. New York: McGraw-Hill.