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**Fitness
for Life**
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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Fitness Voice

EMPOWERING CHILDREN AND DEVELOPING ACTIVE BODIES AND MINDSETS IN WEST PHILADELPHIA

Welcome to the inaugural edition of Fitness Voice, a newsletter by Penn Fitness for Life! We will be discussing our mission in visiting the school, some of our inspirations for helping kids, and more ways to get involved with the organization.

Healthy Schools and Healthy Kids

Being a part of Fitness for Life and getting a chance to go into Spruce Christian School on a weekly basis has really transformed my perspectives on life. The staff and students at Spruce Christian have served as a loving group of family members in Philly. Every time I go, I am welcomed by the cheers and hugs of the children, some of whom I have not even met. It is great getting an opportunity to play and teach kids in a setting where there are so many open minds and active learners.

The afterschool period is especially useful for allowing kids to engage in physical activities because everyone is always excited after a full day of classes. We have a lot of diverse activities planned for

each visit, including bowling, relay races, jump rope, limbo, football, soccer, field hockey, freeze dancing (a longtime favorite!), dodgeball, and several others based on volunteer ideas.

The idea of FFL is to allow kids to have fun and also become well-educated in concepts such as sleeping well, warming up, eating healthy, and stretching. As Penn students, we should take initiative and responsibility for making Philadelphia a healthier and safer city. After all, First Lady Michelle Obama once stated, "It's not about government telling people what to do. ...It's about each of us, in our own families, in our own communities, standing up and demanding more for our kids."



Loving Kids

Sometimes, kids can get out of hand. They can yell, throw a tantrum, and drive people crazy. Sure, it can be easy to get angry at these kinds of behaviors, but that's not the purpose of being a role model. Be assertive yet friendly. Set boundaries and discipline with understanding. Be patient and take a deep breath. At Fitness for Life, we not only work toward improvements in physical health, but also mediate the children's development of mental and emotional health. Open your heart, and you will start to love.



The Power of Chalk

*White smooth sand crumbles
staining asphalt, rebirthing
draws upon the earth*

By Han Shi

What did the haiku make you think of? Did it remind you of the old school days where everyone played with these colorful blocks of excitement? Yes, I recall the times when my friends and I used chalk to create adventures and worlds in the schoolyard. I am grown up now, yet still nostalgic about the old days of carefreeness and idyllic make-believe. I would like to tell you a story about an experience I had with children at B. B. Comegys Elementary School in

West Philadelphia; we used chalk to convey our thoughts about nature and the metaphysics of life.

The day was dimly lit as the rainclouds were just recently transforming into the fluffy, cotton-candied “happy” clouds. I was about to play football with a group of children when a chubby, often nonchalant, kid walked up to me and asked me to draw a Chinese character on the ground. I com-

plied and showed him how to write out “fire” and “water.” This got him very excited, and he told me he was going to try to draw a character. Incredibly enough, he somehow scribbled the picture that meant “plot of land.” Amazing! We both were astounded by this lucky occurrence. He looked at me for a second and I saw in his eyes that twinkle of curiosity. In that short moment, I formed a special connection and had inspired an individual. That was the power of chalk.

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A SECOND AND I SAW IN
HIS EYES THAT TWINKLE
OF CURIOSITY*

ENGAGEMENT: Spotlight On Members



Congratulations to lead volunteers Han Shi and Alex Casella for their hard work in volunteering with FFL this past semester! We commend their dedication in assisting the Penn team and nurturing the kids at Spruce Christian Elementary School!



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