

Kickin' It Kids AntiBullying & Leadership Center Manalapan, NJ

By Pam Teel

Kickin' It Kids" Antibullying and Leadership Center is a place where children can go and feel good about themselves. The center was created to build character and respectful social behaviors and provide a safe environment for children to just be themselves and develop into strong, independent, healthy members of society.

School is the most common environment where bullying takes place, but it doesn't end there. With all the new technology available, bullying can be carried onto the Internet to millions of people in just the click of a button leaving the target embarrassed, powerless, scared, hopeless and depressed. It has even led to children taking their own lives, and the sad part of it is the people who could have helped them, might not even have known about the bullying in the first place.

The Kickin' It Kids Center is a part of the "Bullying -We're Kickin' It" National non-profit organization to help eradicate bullying behavior and to encourage positive behavior amongst our youth and one another. Kickin' It is a unique course of action designed to reduce bullying behavior, improve overall school and social climate, provide youth with the strategies to balance self-confidence, take responsibility of their own actions, and positively intervene to help each other. This powerful 501c3 organization provides school projects, intervention strategies, faculty and bus driver support, and in service workshops in helping schools to create peaceful classrooms, parent guardian groups, student mentoring programs, and social media support.

The Kickin' It Kids Center is also a learning academy that provides programs and has an accredited curriculum from pre-school through high school. The center concentrates on building character, learning respectful social behaviors and character qualities that are necessary for life-long success. It provides character education, positive outlet programs and life skill workshops

within its accredited curriculum. The center provides free community resources, preschool, homeschooling, after school programs, summer camp and more. Their core curriculum reinforces values, manners, etiquette, direct access to positive healthy outlets and life skills workshops.

The home school division provides an accredited curriculum where families can select a faith based or non-faith based curriculum. Home schooled children can also attend the positive outlet programs or life skills workshops held at the Center. Some positive outlet and life skills programs include music, art, dance, animal care, culinary arts, health, sewing, yoga, science, photography, visual arts, and more.

The afterschool program allows students of all ages to participate in positive outlet programs, animal care programs, life skills workshops, as well as the opportunity to become positive peer leaders and mentors through the leadership program.

The center is the first of its kind, embracing all youth from toddlers through college, offering a safe and healthy environment for young adults to commune and be themselves. High school and college students can hold club meetings, game challenges, and many other youth related activities at the center. With a lush four-acre country setting, there are plenty of outside activities to choose from. Adults can also take advantage of the center using it for group meetings, guardian workshops or they too can attend one of the family programs offered at the center.

The center recently held its fifth year celebration on their four acre grounds with many celebrities who support the Kickin' It Kids program in attendance. The event showcased a chili challenge with celebrity guests from Hell's Kitchen and the Food network in attendance, a multi-celebrity autograph signing and musical performances. This was the first year at the present facility, which was purchased in June of

this year. With a lot of work behind them and still some more to do, the center is beginning to take shape thanks to supporters like Everything Natural Too, Tic Tac, and the Home Depot, who donated much needed items necessary for the facility to function.

Donations of playground and sports equipment, basketballs, indoor gym equipment, musical instruments, art supplies, gardening tools, microscopes, computer, photography equipment and items necessary for the culinary kitchen are always welcome!

The next Kickin' It Kids event is scheduled for January 22-24. Kickin' It is the charity partner for the Action Martial Arts Hall of Honors annual event held at Tropicana, Atlantic City, NJ. For more info about the event go to: (www.hohmega.com)

During events and promotion specials the center offers preschool and afterschool programs for a fraction of the price because being a charity, they have supporters that help offset the costs; the supporters naturally wanting the children to benefit from their unique programs. The specials are monthly and the next special will be taking place the week of December 14th thru 18th. All families will have the opportunity to take advantage of the special rates. What a great secure and nurturing place to send a child for schooling, especially one who is having bullying issues in a larger school.

If you would like to make a donation or set up an appointment to visit the school, you can reach the Kickin' It Kids center at: 732-446-3636, or office@werekickinit.org, <http://www.kickinit.org/> Check them out on facebook too. 100 percent of all donations collected go directly to support the Kickin' It Kids Center and program.

The center is located on 337 Iron Ore Road, Manalapan. Not far from Route 33.



Superbowl Champ Plaxico Burress, UFC Athlete Eddie Alvarez, Boxer Ray Mercer, Boxing champ Bobby Czyz with some Kickin' It Kids



To left- former heavy weight boxing champion Ray Mercer with Manalapan police officer UFC Featherweight Phillippe Nover



Celebrity chefs of Hell's Kitchen and The Food Network who are long time supporters of program