

GrayInstitute

PRESENTS



News Release

Adrian, MI, 2008: Nike co-founder Bill Bowerman stated the heartbeat of **Free2Play** years ago when he noted, “If you have a body, you are an athlete.” This profound insight defined how he viewed the endless possibilities for human potential in sports – and, more importantly, in life. **Free2Play** not only believes that every child is an athlete, but also believes it is time to prove this to each and every one of them.

Gray Institute’s **Free2Play** program is a revolutionary enhancement to physical education curricula and can be used in any school. **Free2Play** is focused on enhancing the definition of “athlete” and “sport,” and in doing so, proves to all children that they have worth, value, and dignity, and can play a significant role in the greatest sport ... the sport of giving!

On May 29th, from 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM, at the Adrian College Multisport Performance Stadium, the Gray Institute will be hosting over 1,200 students from several Lenawee County schools (grades 5 through 8) for the Adrian Freedom Festival, where the students will demonstrate and celebrate what they have learned this spring about the “literacy of movement” and becoming physically fit through play. The abilities displayed by the students at the Adrian Freedom Festival are a result of a concentrated, 12-week interaction between PE teachers and the students.

“The stadium will be filled with parents, teachers, service club members, and citizens honoring these kids and cheering them on. I believe the message of kids getting healthy in order to help the health and wellbeing of other kids will strike a chord locally, regionally, and nationally,” said Gary Gray.

Gray, internationally recognized as the foremost authority in fitness, physical training, and sports medicine (also known as “the Father of Function”), calls **Free2Play** the consummation of 34 years of preparation. “This is the mission and work I am focusing on for the rest of my life,” stated Gray.

Gray and his associates have created distance learning materials to empower physical education teachers to enhance fitness and conditioning based on play and teamwork.

“Over 80 percent of our kids do not believe they are athletes. Today’s generation is the first who will live sicker and die younger than their parents. A significant reason they are sicker is that, as a society, we are becoming more sedentary. They don’t exercise, mostly because it isn’t fun. **Free2Play** teaches fitness through play,” said Gray.

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Free2Play is a program designed to *enable the bodies, enhance the minds, and unlock the potential* of the youth across the world.

Gray believes that kids need to be both fit and vital in being healthy. Being fit means that you take care of yourself; being vital means that you use your fitness to help and serve others. As part of **Free2Play**, kids are offered the opportunity to leverage their own commitment to being healthy in order to raise money to help other kids who are not *free to play* because they are homeless, ill, and/or enslaved.

Each participant will be given invitations to distribute for the Adrian Freedom Festival that also serve as business cards that say he or she is “in the business of giving.” They can ask neighbors and friends to sponsor them on their fitness journey by donating money to a secure website that will receive and allocate 100 percent of the donated funds among local, regional, and global organizations that serve youth. The Adrian Freedom Festival will recognize contributions raised by students for:

- Area youth who are homeless or do not have a stable home (Homeless Education Programs of Lenawee County is the local beneficiary);
- Kids who are seriously ill (Toledo Children’s Hospital is the regional beneficiary); and
- Children who are not *free to play* because they are enslaved somewhere in the world (David Batstone’s Not For Sale Campaign is the global beneficiary).

Once young people experience the joy of giving, and learn that they can leverage their individual efforts to make an even bigger impact, it will boost their self-esteem and change paradigms about the amount of good they can do in their lives. “It will definitely raise their expectations and goals,” Gray said. “If you can get a young person to commit to serving others, your work is essentially done. The positive effects will last a lifetime.”

Gray’s goal is to find a national sponsor to enable the distribution of this program to every public and private school in the United States at no cost to the schools. The Adrian Freedom Festival on May 29th is free and open to the public.

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