

# CAMP

Continued • 1

school and high school.

"In year three, I think it's steadily growing," said Holmes, who will be entering his third season as a wide receiver for the New York Jets and his seventh overall in the NFL. "It's a wonderful thing to see the number of kids increasing every year and the families showing their support for their kids in the Fred Taylor/Santonio Holmes Glades All-Star Football Camp. It's a tremendous feeling to know that these kids just want to be like us and I'm thankful we can give them this opportunity."

Taylor, who retired from the NFL last year after playing 13 seasons at running back for the Jacksonville Jaguars and the New England Patriots, echoed Holmes's assessment of their morning camp.

"We want to do whatever we can to give back," Taylor said. "All of the kids in our community here are special. It's not about us putting a name on this camp; it's all about them. We just

want to keep growing and help motivate our kids to stay off the streets and out of trouble. We want to keep making them feel special."

Taylor took the time to talk to the campers, who all ranged from 6-18 years old.

"It makes my heart feel good to see you young kids out here running around and having a good time," Taylor said. "That's what it's all about. When I was your age, I didn't have an opportunity to play with other kids in the community. I had to play in my backyard, which wasn't a bad thing."

Taylor also touched on the importance of taking a stand against bullying and violence – two topics that representatives from the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office talked about as well.

"Do not bully each other," Taylor said. "If you see somebody bullying someone else, do not let it go on. Bullying is bad. If you want to go on and be where me and Santonio are at, or where the Glades Central players are at, then you need to stay out of trouble. Always have fun and have a good time. Be friends to each other. Carry yourself in a polite manner. Don't curse. Say yes sir, yes ma'am, no sir and no ma'am. Be nice to and respect all of your elders because if you do, they'll look out for you."

Holmes spoke directly to the youth campers as well.



PHOTO / NAJI TOBIAS

Fred Taylor speaks with the younger campers about the importance of refraining from bullying and violence.



PHOTO / NAJI TOBIAS

Campers from the third annual Fred Taylor/Santonio Holmes camp participate in a series of conditioning and fundamental drills geared toward improving their agility, speed, endurance and durability on the gridiron.

"We didn't have this opportunity like you have now," said Holmes, who has been playing football since he was six years old. "We had to get everything on our own. You are given this opportunity to learn how to be teammates and be friends with each other. This is where it all starts for you all."

Holmes added that while he and Taylor have played for NFL teams over the years, the real team for them is at their camp in Belle Glade with the youth.

"With the generation of kids, myself and Freddy, we're going to try to take as much blame for you guys as we can from this point on," Holmes said. "We want to continue having this camp from you all. We want you to keep good grades and stay out of trouble. We want you to have as much fun as you can for the rest of your lives."

Marcia Bahia, the PBSO Violent Crimes Division's gang prevention coordinator, added some

encouraging words to the youngsters.

"No matter what people say, you are all special and important," Bahia said. "We took our time to be with you. Now, since you are special and important, you are responsible for making the right choices in your lives. Despite the struggles that we go through in life and our backgrounds, you still have a choice in the end. You can go the right way or the wrong way. We all have the power to choose the right path."

Taylor encouraged everyone to love and support each other out regardless of how tough circumstances may be.

"Take care of each other," Taylor said. "We got to lift and build each other up more. Let's try to stay positive and stay focused. You have a whole lot of people pulling for you to be successful. Believe in yourselves as we continue to believe in you. Let's do this again next year. God bless you all."



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