

## BRC Boxing and Literacy Program a Success at Local Middle School

Boxing Resource Center, in collaboration with Cameron College Preparatory School, successfully completed its pilot boxing and literacy after-school program for twenty 5th and 6th graders. Students earned certificates of completion. Participants read a book about Muhammad Ali, wrote an essay about their experience in the program, and practiced the fundamentals of Olympic-style boxing training.

Coach Christy Halbert from Nashville's Boxing Resource Center, specifically designed the program to support the vision, mission and values of Cameron College Prep (CCP). Halbert, a coach for Team USA at this past summer's Olympic Games, developed a boxing curriculum called "Float, Sting," modeled after Ali's 1960 Gold-medal performance.

"We taught the students Ali's style of 'float like a butterfly, sting like a bee.' So everything was focused on agile footwork, fast punching, punch accuracy, self-control and overall smart boxing. Some of the students even learned the 'Ali Shuffle.' We want students to develop an understanding and appreciation for Olympic-style boxing."  
- Christy Halbert, Director, Boxing Resource Center

The boxing and literacy program was constructed to be an extension of the school day, and provided ways for the students to find links between lessons learned in boxing and those learned in school and home life. Students met after school at CCP. They began each session with a large-group team-building game, and then broke into small groups led by student-mentors from Vanderbilt University. The 5th and 6th graders read and discussed the Walter Dean Myers book, entitled *The Greatest: Muhammad Ali*. Then students reconvened for an hour of boxing training.

The boxing portion of the program was non-contact; students learned to shadow box, practiced jump rope, and with the aid of hand wraps and gloves they were able to hit heavy bags and targets held by mentor coaches. For this pilot program the volunteer mentor-coaches were undergraduate and graduate students from Vanderbilt University: Kerina Dodd, Austin Lanster, Dillon Laaker and Ty West. Yvonne Simerman, an instructor at Nashville State Community College, and a coach/official at BRC, also assisted.

"The kids who participated in the program were always excited on the days that we met. Their enthusiasm and the fact that so many other students want to be a part of it shows what a great tool this is for teaching and as a constructive outlet. I look forward to having it again and expanding the program." -Ernest Rodriguez, Student Services Coordinator, CCP

"The boxing program helped me stay out of trouble." -Bailey Fann-6th grade

"It helped me change my attitude and how to talk to my teachers." -Lastajel Radley-6th grade

"I liked it because of the exercise and discipline." -Mario Martinez -5th grade

"It was fun. It was teaching boxing and discipline. I would do it again." -Taylor Brady-5th grade

"Some of the students really picked up on the boxing skills very quickly, they demonstrated the fundamentals and began to develop crisp punches. The drills in this program are designed to spark their interest in the sport, and to give them a safe place to reduce stress and have fun. It's been a great introduction to the sport." - Christy Halbert, BRC

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CCP is a charter school located in downtown Nashville. The school currently teaches 5th and 6th grades, and next year will add 7th grade. [www.cameroncollegeprep.org](http://www.cameroncollegeprep.org)

BRC is a non-profit, 501.c(3) organization dedicated to training youth and young adults in the art and science of Olympic-style (amateur) boxing. [www.BoxingResource.com](http://www.BoxingResource.com)

