



BY JOE SCOTCHIE

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As reported elsewhere in this section, physical activity is vital to the development of young people. It keeps them away from the television set, the computer screen and too many trips to the refrigerator.

Physical activity is also essential to successful learning. Young people at normal weight levels generally have more active minds.

Fortunately, Nassau County is full of training gyms for young people to get in shape and stay there, however strenuous that may be.

The New York Sports Academy in Oyster Bay offers numerous sports activities to young children, including basketball, baseball and soccer, all of them taught by experienced instructors. The academy is at Bay Avenue, Oyster Bay. Call 516-922-1439.

"The harder you work, the harder it is to surrender." That famous comment by Vince Lombardi is a motto for Joe Donovan's Personal Training and Boxing Instruction gym in Lynbrook. The gym provides instruction in the Sweet Science, boxing and personal training programs designed to burn fat, build muscle, increase endurance and enhance speed and agility. The gym is at 75 Sunset Ave., Lynbrook. Call 516-582-7256.

The Sports Performance Group in Rockville Centre offers a most strenuous training schedule, but also one that has been successful beyond the goal of just staying in shape. This program, for

athletes looking to reach "elite levels," includes the 10,000-hour rule, which translates into hours of practice a day.

According to Sports Performance officials, a long-term commitment to practice and training is required to produce elite players/athletes in all sports.

The athletes who excel in this group are not only committed to excelling



this year but show an unending ability to work toward excellence over time. This program is about more than just staying active; however, it has been beneficial to those who are committed to its regimen.

Coach Jude Massillon, an accomplished ex-collegiate and professional athlete, is the premier "king-maker" Sports Performance Coach and one of only two Nike-rated trainers in the New York metropolitan area.

Massillon institutes training and dietary standards, prepares rehabilitation programs and creates injury treatment strategies for 19 Olympic track and field athletes. He has

trained athletes such as world and Olympic champion Ezekiel Kemboi, world athletics final winner Michael Blackwood, NBA players Charlie Ward and Marcus Camby and NFL players Simeon Rice, Kevin Hardy, Eric Berry, Julius Peppers and Lamar Houston. Massillon is the former owner of ProPrep Football, where he successfully placed 43 players in the first round of the NFL draft over a 10-year period. The Sports Performance Group is at 40 Maple Ave., Rockville Centre. Call 917-545-7099.

Finally, Nassau County is chock full of training programs for special needs youth, including such programs as Be The Best Sport in Port Washington, My Shine Program in Melville, Gymnastique in Syosset and the East Meadow Baseball/Softball Association in East Meadow.

Be The Best Sport allows adolescents to learn the basics of all sports through a hands-on multi-sensory approach. It is at 30 Beechwood Ave. in Port Washington. Call 516-453-0990.

My Shine Program introduces youngsters to the world of horse riding through group lessons, riding, grooming, tacking and games on horseback. It is at the Sweet Hills Riding Center in Melville. Call 516-551-1491.

The East Meadow Baseball/Softball Association is a similarly ambitious program, one that includes top baseball and softball players from other leagues to act as "buddies" to special needs students as they learn America's National Pastime. It is at 30 Merrick Ave., East Meadow. Call 516-794-8965.

## How To Lift A Child's Self-Esteem

It doesn't take long for children to develop positive or negative feelings about themselves.

A recently-published study by researchers at the University of Washington's Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences concluded that children have strong positive or negative self-esteem by age 5.

Great news for those who feel positive; not so good for those who suffer from a more negative personal view.

But parents know that even well-adjusted children can have moments of doubt about their appearance, their intelligence or their ability to make friends.

"Who hasn't felt like less than adequate at some point in our lives," said Cathy Miller, a former foster mother who now serves as national spokeswoman for the UglySnuggles line of educational stuffed animals that help children discover they don't have to be perfect to be loved.

"Being a foster parent taught me a true appreciation for how tender young people are and how easily and drastically their emotions can be damaged. I found that sometimes the simplest solutions can help children build strength, self-reliance and confidence," Miller said.

Whether it's the successful feeling that comes from learning to read or the fears that are associated with being bullied at recess, children experience numerous positive and negative events that play a role in making them feel better or worse about themselves.

**There are a number of ways adults can help children establish a positive self-esteem, Miller said, such as:**

- **Praise them.** Make sure when children do something well that you praise them for their good work. This can help their confidence and encourage them to do more.

- **Let them help.** Even a pre-schooler can do a few simple chores around the house, such as carrying their dirty clothes to the hamper or picking up their toys.

- **Allow them to make choices.** Does the child need a new pair of

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