

THE CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT TAKES THE TYSON FITNESS CHALLENGE BY STORM

By Mary Kate Oreovicz

Beginning in January 2009, personal trainer and fitness champion Sean Blay, under the direction of Cindy Morano, incorporated the Tyson Fitness Challenge into all aspects of the Chicago Park District's programming; beginning with each of their eight locations running two different camps during four sessions. Each camp followed the Tyson Fitness Challenge, a daily rotation using a program designed by Blay and taught to the staff. For six weeks, gymnasts participated in the Tyson Fitness Challenge initiative to promote fitness and a healthy lifestyle. Sean said, "I would use cardio games on Mondays as our warm up, then as we would begin our stretching exercises, I would show the students the 'stretch of the week. The coaches would work on the 'strength progressions' during that Tyson Fitness Challenge rotation for that day. I made up the Wall of Fame at my two gyms and we tracked our progressions just so the gymnasts could see they're improvements from just that one week! It motivated some, and pushed others to try harder."

"The Tyson Fitness Challenge has been a great addition to the Chicago Park District Youth Programming and the City of Chicago's Special Events," said Cindy Morano. "The Tyson Fitness curriculum entices children of all ages, all sports, and various ability levels and engages them in physical activity while having fun."

From June 26-July 5, 2009, the Chicago Park District participated in the Taste of Chicago. The Tyson Fitness Zone was a popular stop in the 2016 Olympic bid area, with approximately 8,000 children participating throughout the 10-day event.

The general gymnastics curriculum at the Chicago Park District benefitted greatly from the incorporation of the Tyson Fitness Challenge in its daily practice, focusing on four fundamental components: cardiovascular

exercise, strength training, flexibility and nutrition. Each of these areas is critical to developing a strong fitness base for everyone, not only those in the sport of gymnastics, but also those participating



SEAN BLAY AND CINDY MORANO



PICTURED ABOVE: TYSON FITNESS CHALLENGE AT THE CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT

in other sports and activities. By promoting these four fundamentals, the Park District has helped to establish a foundation of healthy eating habits, lifestyle choices, and activity for today's youth.

USA Gymnastics is proud to spotlight Sean Blay, Cindy Morano, and the Chicago Park District for promoting health and fitness to youth with the 2009 Tyson Fitness Challenge.

Remember, it is not too late to participate in the Tyson Fitness Challenge by incorporating the program into your fall classes and tailoring the exercises to your gym's needs. You can also use these ideas to launch your gym's plans for National Gymnastics Day on Sept 12 and even with your school this fall. Is your gym raising funds for the Children's Miracle Network as part of your Tyson Fitness Challenge? If so, be sure to get your pledges in by November 9 to qualify for prizes. Visit our web site to see the list of prizes for the clubs and individual fundraisers! ✂

Submit funds to:

Children's Miracle Network
204 West 700 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84101
Attention: Cindee Starkie

We have reached a million dollars and Children's Miracle Network thanks us, but we have more children to help.