



Neighborhood children receive basketball instruction during a block party Sept. 19 at the Turkey Thicket Recreation Center at 1100 Michigan Ave. NE. The John Thompson Foundation, which sponsored the event, centers its efforts on children whose health or educational opportunities may be at-risk.

John Thompson Foundation Focuses on Children

Kids Enjoy A Fund-raising Block Party At Turkey Thicket

By KELLEY DUPUIS

Children are what the John Thompson Foundation is all about, and about 100 kids attended a block party sponsored by the foundation Sept. 19 at the Turkey Thicket recreation Center, 1100 Michigan Ave. NE.

John Thompson III, currently coach of the Georgetown University Hoyas basketball team, started the foundation in 2007 as a nonprofit organization aimed at fostering and supporting other nonprofits that serve children and their families, its primary focus being education and health care.

Event spokesman Barry Florence said the foundation's special concern is at-risk children -- children whose

health might be in jeopardy due to lack of financial or other resources, or sometimes because of abuse.

This year the Thompson Foundation has partnered with the Washington Jesuit Academy, which provides education tuition-free to boys in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades.

"Basketball is the organization's lineage," said Florence, noting that the father of the organization's founder, John Thompson II, was a notable basketball coach at Georgetown before his son's tenure, and played in the NBA for the Boston Celtics with such stellar figures as Bill Russell. "But the idea behind the organization is that John wants to give something back to the community

he was raised in."

"Having grown up in Washington, D.C., the city has always held a special place in his heart," Florence continued. "He coached for a time at Princeton, and when he returned home, he decided he wanted to do something for the community and the foundation was started."

Beneficiaries of other foundation events in the community have included Capitol Breast Cancer, the Boys and Girls Clubs and other organizations, Florence said.

Radio personality Donnie Simpson and Ward 5 Councilmember Harry Thomas were among those on hand for the Sept. 19th event, which

centered around basketball instruction, but also included eye and hearing exams. Clowns were on hand, there was face-painting for the kids, and the Washington Jesuit Academy had an informational booth at the block party.

"They are trying to make this an annual event, which will also include a dinner for their partners," Florence said. "They pick a different partner each year. They'll pick a partner organization, have a dinner and then the next day have another block party. This year it was in Ward 5, and the hope is to do it each year in another ward."

For information on the foundation, go to jtiifoundation.org, or call. ★



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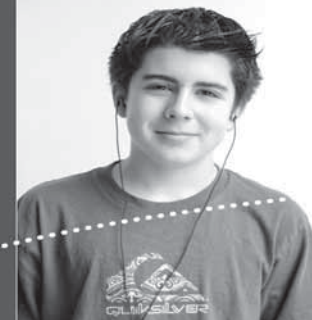
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