



No room for bullies on this basketball court

Harlem Globetrotter `Hoops' Green shares straight talk, sharp tricks at Boys & Girls Club

By Kori Tuitt

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LOWELL — When Briana “Hoops” Green stepped onto the basketball court at the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell, dozens of kids applauded.

On Wednesday afternoon, she sported her red, white, blue and yellow uniform along with an equally colorful basketball in hand.

Green made a special appearance as part of the Harlem Globetrotters T.E.A.M. program, which includes important antibullying messages. “T.E.A.M.” stands for “Talk, Empathy, Ask a Question and Mobilize.” In between her positive messages, she intertwined basketball tricks that elicited applause, cheers and complete awe.

“If you see someone getting bullied, never be a bystander,” 27-year-old Green said. “Speak up. Intervene.”

When talking about empathy, Green called up a volunteer to shoot the basketball into the hoop. Green encouraged the crowd to cheer her on as she attempted to make her shots. When the basketball finally swished through the net, the kids erupted in cheers and applause.

Irwin Edwards, a 12-year-old Lowell resident, was one of the volunteers of the day at the Boys & Girls Club. He has been attending the Boys & Girls Club for the past four years. Irwin and 11-year-old Julius Richardson, were tasked with trying to

Please see **COURT/10**



Harlem Globetrotter Briana "Hoops" Green passes a spinning basketball to Joy Curran, 10, of Lowell, during a visit to the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell on Wednesday for an anti-bullying program. **Video at lowellsun.com.**

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COURT/ From Page 1 steal the ball from Green.

"I think it was nice that we also got to engage in the activities," Irwin said. "It was really cool to be able to do all the tricks. My favorite part was when we had to steal the ball."

Green also stressed the importance of having someone to talk in your life who is reliable.

Following her Boys & Girls Club visit, Green traveled just minutes away to Girls Inc. for a similar inspirational talk and hands-on activity for about 10 girls. Fittingly, Wednesday was also National Girls & Women in Sports Day.

"I would encourage you ladies to go for it," Green told them. "Women are breaking barriers everyday."

Green, herself, is the 15th woman to become a Harlem Globetrotters team member since its founding in 1926. She has been with the Globetrotters for the past three years, following three years as a professional basketball player. As a professional player, she had the opportunity to travel across Europe and Mexico.

"I think it was a very good and fun thing for her to come here. She's very nice," said 10-year-old Jordyn Lee, of Lowell. "She's a good influence for other girls who want to play basketball."

Yureissy Rodriguez, 11, said the whole thing was fun and inspiring.

"I like when she showed us the tricks and when she said we could be anything we want," said Yureissy, of Lowell.

Pamela Larocque, Girls Inc. program coordinator, said while the girls seewomen in leadership roles at Girls Inc., it is significant for them to see that reflected outside of the organization.

"To see someone take the time who is a leader to come in and visit them is profound," Larocque said. "They understand the impact of that."

Larocque added that Girls Inc. was incredibly grateful that the Tsongas Center reached out to them with this opportunity.

For Green, it's more than coming in to do a few tricks. It's about spreading a positive message and being a responsible role model.

"It's important to encourage kids, especially girls, to just go for it," Green said. "If you have something you're passionate about, something that's positive, a dream, everyday, I'd encourage them to commit a little time to it."

The Harlem Globetrotters will have a show at the Tsongas Center on Sunday, Feb. 17 at 2 p.m. For more information, visit www.tsongascenter.com.

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Jeremiah Perez, 9, right, repeats a series of moves he'd just been taught by Briana "Hoops" Green, as Yvonne Welsh, 16, center, and Cailyn Champoux, 12, right rear, look on. The kids are all from Lowell.

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Harlem Globetrotters player Briana "Hoops" Green tries to keep the ball away from Irwin Edwards, 12, front left, and Julius Richardson, 10, as Yvonne Welsh, 16, looks on. The kids are all from Lowell.

Watch video at lowellsun.com.

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Harlem Globetrotter Briana "Hoops" Green encourages Cailyn Champoux, 12, of Lowell, to make a basket. At left is Yvonne Welsh, 16, of Lowell. **Watch video at lowellsun.com.**