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NFL Network Teams up with New York's First Lady, Verizon FiOS TV and New York Giants to Roll Out 2009 National *Keep Gym in School* Campaign at MAT 126 on Manhattan's Lower East Side

NFL Network expands national effort to boost fitness and physical education in schools

NFL Network Host Rich Eisen and Giants' Cornerback Corey Webster were joined by other New York Giants to help unveil refurbished school PE facilities, lead students in fitness activities and football-inspired drills at on-field minicamp

NEW YORK, NY – NFL Network teamed up with New York First Lady Michelle Paige Paterson, Verizon FiOS TV and the New York Giants today to kick off the second year of its national *Keep Gym in School* program and to officially inaugurate a new fitness center at PS/IS 126 Manhattan Academy of Technology (MAT) on the Lower East Side. The First Lady joined City and School officials and MAT 126 students, faculty and staff in an energetic pep rally emceed by NFL Network Host Rich Eisen, before Corey Webster and other New York Giants led students through fitness activities and football-inspired drills during an on-field minicamp. As part of the league's NFL PLAY 60 youth health and fitness campaign, *Keep Gym in School* is NFL Network's comprehensive national program to boost fitness and physical education in America's middle schools.

"Teaching our children about the benefits of exercise and fitness is critical to the development of a health consciousness that will serve them throughout their lives. 'Keep Gym in School' will be a wonderful complement to the Healthy Steps program we launched here in New York to fight childhood obesity. We're pleased to have NFL Network, the Giants and Verizon as partners in this important effort," said First Lady Paterson.

"The latest statistics about increases in childhood obesity and related chronic diseases just underscore the need for quality PE in schools," said Rich Eisen. "MAT 126 has shown a strong commitment to helping students be healthy and active. We at NFL Network are pleased to support their efforts to give their students top quality Physical Education."

"It's really an honor to be able to share my love of sports and fitness with these young people, and to let them know you don't have to be an athlete to enjoy physical activity. The more kids we can teach that important lesson, the better off we'll all be as they grow up into healthy adults," added Webster.

MAT 126 has made physical activity a priority. The school is an active participant in the C.H.A.M.P.S. middle school sports and fitness league, and has worked to secure private funding for additional athletic programs. The \$50,000 *Keep Gym in School* grant from NFL Network will help MAT 126 continue providing students with quality fitness programming by expanding in-school PE options and adding a fitness center with state-of-the-art equipment to engage young people of all abilities in physical activity during school.



In addition, students at MAT 126 and up to fifty other New York City middle schools will participate in the NFL Network In-School Fitness Program developed in conjunction with the National Association for Sports and Physical Education (NASPE) to measure students' fitness levels and encourage them to stay active throughout the year. One motivated student who shows the most fitness improvement over the next six months will be recognized at the *Keep Gym in School* National Honors event during the 2010 NFL Draft.

"Under Mayor Bloomberg's leadership, we have made our school breakfast and lunch menus healthier by eliminating trans-fat and reducing sodium, and, at the same time, integrated the importance of fitness and health into our children's education to encourage them to grow up with habits of good nutrition. NFL Network's 'Keep Gym in School' program is a great addition to New York's comprehensive effort to fight childhood obesity," said Deputy Mayor Dennis M. Walcott.

"A recent study of New York City students showed that active students are healthier and achieve higher academic success than students who are less active and fit. Those findings underscore why quality physical education is so important. We welcome and appreciate NFL Network's support for New York City schools through 'Keep Gym in School' and applaud them for leading a national effort to expand quality PE programming," said Lori Rose Benson, Director of Fitness and Health Education for New York City Public Schools.

"As a New York City-based company, with thousands of employees living and working in the city, we're pleased to join NFL Network and the New York Giants in bringing 'Keep Gym in School' to New York City Schools. Kids at MAT 126 and throughout the City school system will benefit from the comprehensive program. And it's indicative of Verizon's long history of community involvement and sponsoring activities for our children," said Andrés Irlando, Verizon's President for the company's New York Region.

State Senator Daniel Squadron said, "With the obesity epidemic on the rise, physical fitness is, now more than ever, a vital component of our children's education. Working together with the NFL and these players, we can perform a Giant service to our kids by ensuring their health and well-being."

Through *Keep Gym in School*, NFL Network is working on several levels to expand and improve PE:

- **Public Service Campaign.** *Keep Gym in School* Public Service Announcements (PSAs) featuring Webster and other NFL players will run on NFL Network, in NFL games on broadcast partners and on Verizon FiOS, the company's all fiber-optic television service.
- **National School Adoption Grants.** Middle schools throughout the country can compete for ten \$1,000 grants that will be awarded in the spring of 2010 to fund physical education program improvements. The public can nominate their local middle school at <http://www.keepgyminscool.com>
- **School Adoptions & Minicamps.** Four deserving middle schools across the country, including MAT 126 in New York City, will get \$50,000 grants to help refurbish facilities, fund physical education instructors and add or update equipment. NFL Network hosts a pep rally and minicamp at each adopted school with on-air talent and players to motivate students.
- **NFL Network In-School Fitness Program.** Students from every middle school in the adopted schools' districts will compete in an In-School Fitness Program to assess student fitness, encourage students to stay active and allow teachers to monitor student progress throughout the year.
- **Continuing Support Grants.** Middle schools from the four districts that participated in last year's adoption program will again participate in the In-School Fitness Program, with the most-improved school in each district winning a \$2,500 grant to continue providing quality PE.
- **Lesson Plans.** In partnership with National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), *Keep Gym in School* developed in-school instructional material to get kids excited about PE.

Football-inspired lesson plans and activity guides are available to PE instructors for free at <http://www.keepgyminscool.com/educators.html>.

- **Keep Gym in School National Honors at NFL Draft Week 2010.** NFL Network will host a national honors event in New York City during NFL Draft Week to recognize teachers and top-performing students from adopted school districts.

About NFL Network:

NFL Network airs seven days a week, 24 hours a day on a year-round basis and is the only television network fully dedicated to the NFL and the sport of football. For more information, log on to www.nfl.com/nflnetwork. NFL.com is the exclusive Internet home of NFL Network.

About NFL PLAY 60:

Designed to tackle childhood obesity, NFL PLAY 60 brings together the NFL's long-standing commitment to health and fitness with partner organizations like Kellogg. NFL PLAY 60 is also implemented locally, as part of the NFL's in-school, after-school and team-based programs. For more information, visit www.NFLRUSH.com.

About Verizon:

Verizon Communications Inc. (NYSE:VZ), headquartered in New York, is a global leader in delivering broadband and other wireless and wireline communications services to mass market, business, government and wholesale customers. Verizon Wireless operates America's most reliable wireless network, serving more than 87 million customers nationwide. Verizon's Wireline operations provide converged communications, information and entertainment services over the nation's most advanced fiber-optic network. Wireline also includes Verizon Business, which delivers innovative and seamless business solutions to customers around the world. A Dow 30 company, Verizon employs a diverse workforce of more than 235,000 and last year generated consolidated operating revenues of more than \$97 billion. For more information, visit www.verizon.com.

About The New York Football Giants:

The New York Football Giants began play in 1925 and is a cornerstone franchise of the National Football League. With six (6) championships and over 600 victories, the Giants are considered one of sports all-time great franchises. The Giants are headquartered at the Timex Performance Center, in East Rutherford, N.J.

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