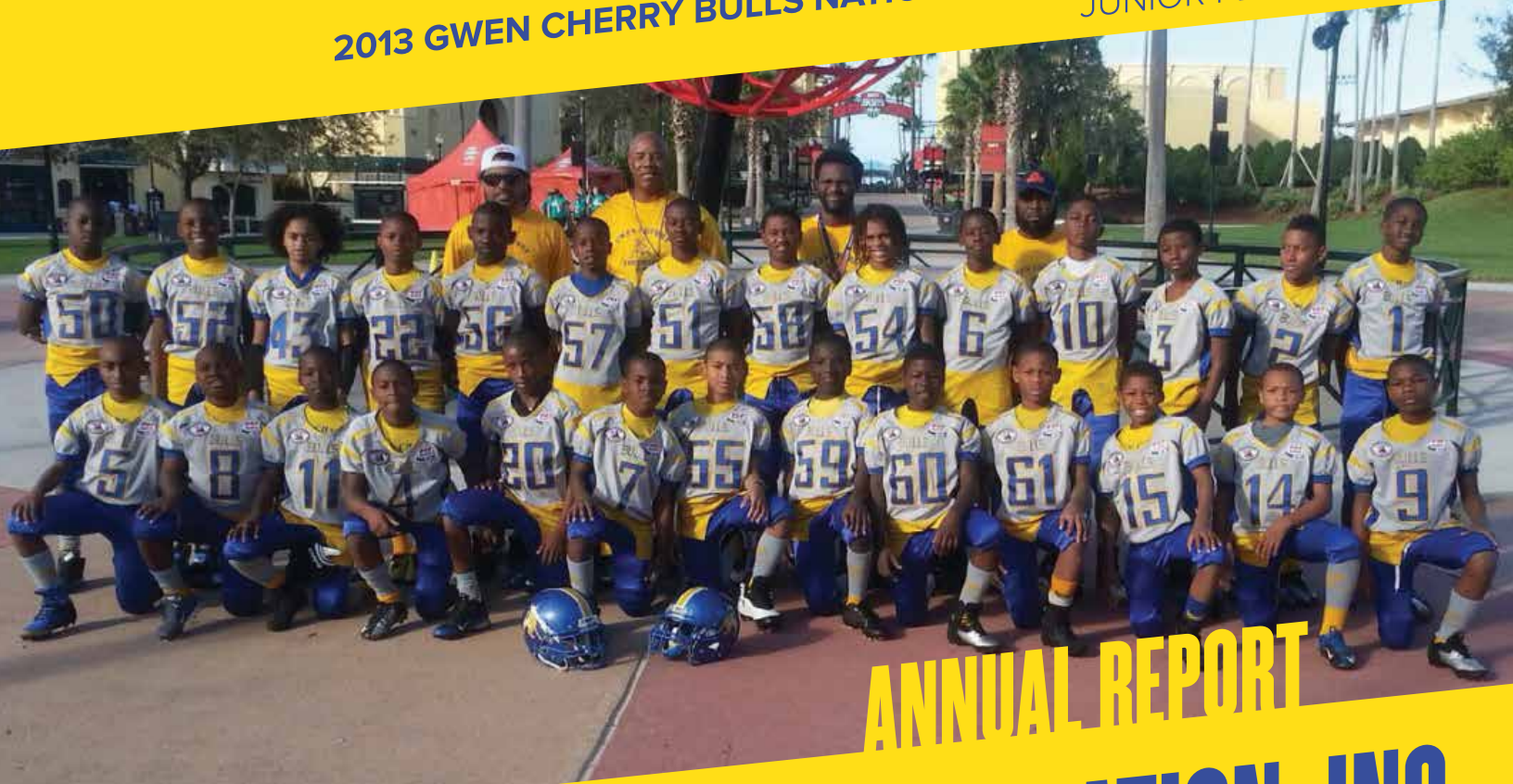


2013 GWEN CHERRY BULLS NATIONAL POP WARNER CHAMPIONS  
JUNIOR PEE-WEE TEAM



ANNUAL REPORT

# GWEN CHERRY PARK FOUNDATION, INC.

PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR THE NFL YOUTH EDUCATION TOWN AT GWEN CHERRY PARK

2013 - 2014



[WWW.GWENCHERRYPARKFOUNDATION.ORG](http://WWW.GWENCHERRYPARKFOUNDATION.ORG)

“IT IS FAR EASIER TO BUILD STRONG CHILDREN, THAN TO REPAIR BROKEN MEN.”

- FREDERICK DOUGLASS



# NFL YET at Gwen Cherry Park

## NFL YET Center Amenities

- Computer room
- Multi-purpose rooms
- Large dividable classrooms
- Reception area
- Air conditioned gymnasium
- Miami Dolphins fitness arcade
- Game room
- Kitchen
- Library
- Arts and crafts room
- Covered patio
- Administrative offices

## Park Amenities

- 2 lighted athletic fields
- 800-person bleacher seating
- Lighted 400-meter track
- 2 lighted basketball courts
- 2 lighted tennis courts
- Lighted baseball diamond
- Lighted softball diamond
- Swimming pool
- Fitness zone with shaded canopy
- Tot lot
- Amphitheater
- Picnic area

**7090 N.W. 22nd Avenue • Miami, Florida 33147**  
**(305) 694-4889**

<http://www.miamidade.gov/parks/gwen-cherry.asp>

 **NFL YET Center Miami**

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR THE GWEN CHERRY PARK FOUNDATION (#CH21734) MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE FLORIDA DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.



## LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Friends of the NFL YET Center,

This year has been a fantastic year for the children at the NFL Youth Education Town (NFL YET) at Gwen Cherry Park. One of the highlights of their lives was the visit by First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama. Mrs. Obama came to the NFL YET to celebrate the 4th Anniversary of her signature “Let’s Move” child fitness campaign. Mrs. Obama engaged with the kids in activities such as yoga, zumba, and miniature golf. She also talked to the kids about maintaining healthy lifestyles.

In competitions, our children made us all proud. Our Jr. Pee Wee football team won a Pop Warner National Football Championship. It was a great source of pride for this community to watch its kids on ESPN 3 shut out its opponent (26-0) to win the third national football championship for the Gwen Cherry Bulls. They were joined at the National Championship by our Mitey Mites cheerleading team, who was invited to perform at the national competition. Our dance team won two regional and one local “I Love to Dance” competitions. We were also pleased that for the first time in many years we were able to re-establish our baseball program by fielding three baseball teams. This helped to strengthen the quality and quantity of programs and activities at the NFL YET.

As you will see from this year’s 2013-2014 Annual Report, the Gwen Cherry Park Foundation has been supportive of many programs and activities at the NFL YET at Gwen Cherry Park. We have been able to do so through your “Give Miami Day” donations and support throughout the year. If you have not already done so, please make a generous contribution to the **Gwen Cherry Park Foundation, Inc.** so that we can continue to fund high quality academic and athletic programs and other activities for our children.

Thank you for helping us to provide positive programs and activities for our children to “SAY YES” to!

For the children,

H.T. Smith, Chairman

Life is Good!

# Gwen Cherry Bulls

## 2013 Pop Warner National Champions



**Gwen Cherry Bulls Jr. Pee Wee Team defeated the Virginia Beach Mustangs at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex in Orlando**

**NATIONAL  
CHAMPIONSHIP**  
Jr. Pee Wee Team

**1999**

**NATIONAL  
CHAMPIONSHIP**  
Pee Wee Team

**2001**

**NATIONAL  
CHAMPIONSHIP GAME**  
Jr. Midgets

**2012**

# Winning Against the Odds



(Gerardo Mora IPAPhoto.com)

Even though the Gwen Cherry Bulls Junior (Jr.) Pee Wee team won every game locally and on the regional level and was designated as the Miami Dolphins' "Team of the Week", when they entered the final 2013 Pop Warner National Championship game, they were slated to lose against the Virginia Beach Mustangs.

The Mustangs were the 2012 returning Pop Warner Jr. Pee Wee National Champions. According to the announcers, Virginia Beach Mustangs was "one of the best teams in the country." Its teams had won two national championships and had a coach that had previously won national games. Thankfully, the Gwen Cherry Bulls team, their coaches and their family, didn't listen to the commentary.

The last time that the Gwen Cherry Bulls had won a national championship game was in 2001 with its Pee Wee team. In fact, almost every year the Gwen Cherry Bulls has a team competing in the regional championship games. But every team knows: teams that win at the local and regional level, do not always win a national championship game. In fact, in the 2012, the Gwen Cherry Bulls Jr. Midget team participated in the Pop Warner National Championship finale, but lost 14 – 0 to the Marshall Heights Bisons (DC).

During the 2013 Pop Warner national championship games, both the Gwen Cherry Bulls and the Virginia Beach Mustangs had won against two other teams. As the Gwen Cherry Bulls approached the championship, Head Coach Javon Ferguson, Sr. had a feeling. Even though he had never coached a team that had competed on a national level, he and the team remained confident.

However, despite the Gwen Cherry Bulls Jr. Pee Wee team's successes, as the game began, the announcers said that the odds were against them. The team had a secret weapon. What the announcers did not know is that the team members believed in the team and themselves. Coach Ferguson says, "That morning, the players woke the coaches up and said 'We are ready.'" From there, he knew his team would win.

With a grant from the Gwen Cherry Park Foundation and funds contributed by the Boys and Girls Clubs of Miami-Dade, the team's families and friends, the Jr. Pee Wee team was able to compete and win the 2013 Pop Warner National Championship. The team won against the Virginia Beach Mustangs with a score of 26 – 0.

Their opponents were a mighty team, but the Gwen Cherry Bulls offense and defense were more determined to win against the odds.



# 2013 Pop Warner National Champions

# Year in Review



## November 2013

- 9 Gwen Cherry Bulls Jr. Pee Wee team wins Pop Warner Miami Super Bowl and is selected as the Miami Dolphins' Team of the Week
- 20 Gwen Cherry Park Foundation participates in Give Miami Day
- 22 Thanksgiving Dinner at the NFL YET

## December 2013

- 13 Gwen Cherry Bulls Mitey Mites cheerleading team perform at the Pop Warner Cheerleading National Championship
- 14 Gwen Cherry Bulls Jr. Pee Wee team wins the 2013 Division I Pop Warner National Championships
- 23 NFL YET Winter Camp starts
- 23 Annual Christmas Festival

## January 2014

- 14 1<sup>st</sup> Year Line Dance Program Celebration
- 25 Start of 6 weeks of Yoga Classes at Center
- 25 Hosted Miami-Dade County Park's Tennis Play Day
- 29 Martin Luther King Oratorical Contest

## February 2014

- 4 County Commission recognition of Championship Team
- 14 Couples' Valentine Day Dance
- 22 Hosted Commissioner Jean Monestime's Black Heritage Festival
- 25 First Lady Michelle Obama visits the NFL YET Center of Miami to announce the expansion of her Let's Move campaign
- 28 Black History Show

## March 2014

- 4 Dr. Seuss Day

## April 2014

- 16 Easter Egg Hunt

# Year in Review (cont'd)

## May 2014

- 10 Dance Team wins 1<sup>st</sup> Place in the Pee-Wee, Junior Pee Wee & Junior Divisions of the "I Love To Dance" Hip Hop Championships in Orlando, Florida
- 17 Dance Teams wins 3 awards – 1<sup>st</sup> Place and 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> Place in the "I Love To Dance" Championship' in Miami - Shorty Hip Hop, Junior Jazz\Hip Hop & Teens Jazz\Hip Hop Divisions
- 21 Graduation Ceremony

## June 2014

- 7 Jr. Pee Wee National Football Championship Team Dinner
- 9 Start of the Summer Program (10 weeks)

## July 2014

- 24 Fitness Zone Shade Canopy Dedication
- 24 West Field Lighting Dedication

## August 2014

- 7 Hosted Urban League & Miami-Dade County Police Community Night Out Event
- 9 Hosted Commissioner Jean Monestime's Back To School Book Bag Give-A-Way
- 30 Gwen Cherry Bulls football and cheerleading season begins

## September 2014

- 13 Wilkie D. Ferguson Jr. Bar Association sponsors the "Play It Forward" Football Tournament Fundraiser to fund a summer internship for a NFL YET student

## October 2014

- 11 Gwen Cherry Bulls Homecoming
- 28 Say No To Drugs Program
- 29 Breast Cancer Awareness
- 31 Harvest Dance





## ZUMBA WITH THE FIRST LADY OF THE UNITED STATES

The First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama visited the NFL YET at Gwen Cherry Park to speak at a news conference marking the fourth anniversary of her signature “Let’s Move!” campaign. Following the press conference, Mrs. Obama participated in Zumba classes, yoga and golf lessons with youth at the NFL YET Center. She was accompanied by actress Amy Poehler, star of NBC’s Parks and Recreation television show, television host Mario Lopez, NBA Hall of Famer Alonzo Mourning and NBC Today Show’s Jenna Bush Hagar.

One of the young participants, Destaknee Cash, felt that working out with the First Lady of the United States was “very exciting.” Eleven year old Teona Dorsey, who, the previous week, had been diagnosed with Bell’s palsy, was excited and happy over being selected to exercise with the First Lady. Kimberly Sampson, felt it was “a privilege” to have been chosen.

Teona spoke about being diagnosed with a condition that took her smile away, but came back after working out with Mrs. Obama. For Teona, the

happiness had a lasting and positive effect. She said that she experienced so much joy that the condition vanished and restored her “Christmas smile.” Her mom, Elizabeth Williams, stated, “I was so happy it was gone.”

Teona added effusively, “I felt very important. I felt like she could be a friend. We [the children] were being ourselves. We knew who she was. I knew I was standing next to a celebrity or two maybe three. I was so happy. She’s a role model to me. She inspired me.”





# Grants and Social Activities Funded

November 1, 2013 - October 31, 2014



## Gwen Cherry Bulls Cheerleading Team

The Foundation provided grants to the Boys and Girls Clubs to support three Gwen Cherry Bulls cheerleading teams to attend the Regional Competitions and for the Mitey Mites to perform at the 2013 Pop Warner Cheerleading National Championship.

## Gwen Cherry Bulls Football Team

The Foundation provided grants to the Boys and Girls Clubs to support the Gwen Cherry Bulls Jr. Pee Wee football team's participation in the Level I and II Regional Competitions and their winning trip to the 2013 Pop Warner National Football Championship.



## Thanksgiving Dinner

The Foundation provided grants to Communities In Schools for its annual Thanksgiving Dinner at the park.

## NFL YET Center Annual Christmas Festival

The Foundation provided funds for the NFL YET Toy Give-A-Way and other activities during the Annual Christmas Festival. Over 400 youth and parents were in attendance.



## Score Store

The Foundation provided a grant to Communities In Schools for the "Score Store," an incentive program which allows students to earn points for good behavior, participation, attendance and achievement and use those points to "purchase" prizes throughout the year.

## Gwen Cherry Bulls Football Team Awards Banquet

The Foundation sponsored an awards dinner for the players, coaches and parents to celebrate the Jr. Pee Wee team's 2013 Pop Warner National Football Championship win.



## Graduation

The Foundation provided grants to Communities in Schools of Miami to have an end of the year celebration of their participants' educational achievements.



## Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces

In connection with The Miami Foundation's Public Space Challenge, the Foundation provided funds to Miami-Dade County for shade covering over the outdoor fitness area at the park.



## NFL YET ACHIEVER

**Ja’Niya L. Grimes** is a seven-year old who has overcome much in her young life. At the age of three, she suffered from a rare skin condition and had to undergo chemotherapy. She was extremely shy, anti-social and withdrawn, not wanting to be around anyone. After chemotherapy, “She was a soldier and bounced back the next day,” states her mom, Jannie Drayton-Grimes. However, it was a tough time for Ja’Niya and her family.

When she first came to the Communities in School’s program at the NFL YET, Ja’Niya screamed and cried on the floor. Since then, she has shown great improvement in expressing her feelings and communicating. Ja’Niya’s mom believes the staff at the NFL YET is the reason for the significant change in her daughter’s personality.

At first, Ja’Niya would hide all day in the Communities in School manager’s office. Now, she interacts with other children in the program and has made friends. According to Ja’Niya’s mom, her progress is proof of the determination and caring of the NFL YET staff. Ms. Drayton-Grimes continues, “As a result of the patience shown to Ja’Niya and being treated the same as other children, Ja’Niya began to open up.” She adds, “I really do appreciate that.”

Now, Ja’Niya is talkative and bubbling with enthusiasm to spend time at the NFL YET. She talks with the staff and has started showing interest in learning new skills. She has become better in math, reading and writing. “I thank the staff for her improvement. She is becoming a normal child,” says Ms. Drayton-Grimes. At home, Ja’Niya is interested in the computer and loves to play and sing with her five year old Yorkie named “Rudy.” Thankfully, Ja’Niya has been off of medication for almost a year and is doing well.

Ms. Drayton-Grimes has great praise for the staff at the NFL YET. “Mr. Pratt knows every kid who comes through the NFL YET Center. He has respect for kids and parents. He loves every kid who comes through there as if they are his own. She adds, “As well, the staff greets you with a smile. I feel like they will take care of the kids when the parents are not around and they will help kids learn even more.” Ms. Drayton-Grimes has recommended the NFL YET to her sister and a co-worker. Today, their children are also participating in the NFL YET programs.

Ja’Niya loves the NFL YET. “She gave them a hard time in the beginning, but she’s okay now. All of the staff have made a positive impact on Ja’Niya’s life,” says Ms. Drayton-Grimes appreciatively.

**Ja’Niya L. Grimes**



# Gwen Cherry Park Foundation Wins the Public Space Challenge

When The Miami Foundation launched its first annual Public Space Challenge in 2013, the Gwen Cherry Park Foundation asked for suggestions for projects to submit. The project that resonated the most with park staff and residents was erecting a shade canopy over the outdoor fitness area.

On October 17, 2013, the Gwen Cherry Park Foundation was notified that it was one of 15 winners of the inaugural Public Space Challenge. Within eight months, the project was completed on time and on budget.



Installed in Gwen Cherry Park in 2012, the outdoor fitness area was created to encourage outdoor exercise at the park. However, given the abundance of sunshine in Miami, people (young and old alike) shied away from using that area of the park.

To encourage additional use of this park amenity, the Gwen Cherry Park Foundation posted an idea on the Public Space Challenge website for a shade covering. The idea received tremendous support from seniors and families who frequent the park.

On July 24, 2014, the community celebrated the installation of the new 50 ft x 50 ft Mega Span shade canopy. The Gwen Cherry Park Foundation thanks The Miami Foundation, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Jean Monestime, District 2, Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces and the community for their support of this project.

## Guardian Angel Award Recipient Art Xiques



In 2012, when the Gwen Cherry Park Foundation built a 5,000 sq. ft. addition to the NFL YET Center, at a cost of over \$1 million, Art Xiques was selected as the construction consultant to advise the Gwen Cherry Park Foundation Board of Directors through the complex construction project. He proved to be a great problem solver and an invaluable resource for any challenge that arose. He provided expert advice regarding permitting, pricing, inspections and every phase of the construction of the Center's addition.

Also, he demonstrated that his generosity matched his mastery of construction. While working on the project, Art met many of the children and was very impressed with the NFL YET's positive academic and athletic programs for them. As a result, he decided that he wanted to make a personal contribution to the project. He informed the Gwen Cherry Park Foundation's board that he would unilaterally reduce his consulting fee by 50%.

In recognition of his work and efforts to improve the quality of the building and his support for the positive programs offered at the NFL YET, the Gwen Cherry Park Foundation selected Art Xiques as the recipient of its 2013 Guardian Angel Award. The Guardian Angel Award is given each year to a person who has made an extraordinary contribution to the programs, finances, or infrastructure of the NFL YET at Gwen Cherry Park. During the award presentation, Art expressed his appreciation for being selected. He remarked, "I am happy and thankful that I was able to contribute to the great work that is being done for the children at the NFL YET at Gwen Cherry Park."

# Gwen Cherry Park Foundation Board of Directors



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## Donors

We would like to thank the following persons and organizations for their generous financial support of the Foundation during 2013 - 2014<sup>1</sup>

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***Because of your support, our youth can be achievers.***

<sup>1</sup>From November 1, 2013 - October 31, 2014

# Help us give the children at the NFL YET at Gwen Cherry Park something positive to “Say Yes” to!



*Sports*



*After School Programs*



*Access to Technology*



*Public Speaking*



*Outdoor Activities*



*Special Events*

Stay informed about the activities of the Gwen Cherry Park Foundation and the NFL YET Center at Gwen Cherry Park. Log onto our website [www.gwencherryparkfoundation.org](http://www.gwencherryparkfoundation.org), Like us on Facebook (Gwen Cherry Park Foundation) and subscribe to our email list.

Special thanks to Bobby Johnson, Karla Brown, Eve McKinsey, O.J. Miller, Sandra Gay, Douglas Lance, Teekay, Shen Johnson, Cal Brewton, Jannie Drayton-Grimes, Commissioner Monestime's office and Armando Rodriguez for submitting information and photos for this Annual Report.



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