

HONORING 9-11 WITH A NETWORK OF FIRST RESPONDER ATHLETES

ATHLETES FOR AMERICA, Sunshine Toyota, First Wesleyan Church, PrideCare Ambulance, ZOLL, Pocket CPR, Battle Creek Central High School, Harper Creek High School, Lake View High School, Marshall High School, Pennfield High School, and Saint Phillip High School team up to create a safer America.

On Saturday morning September 15, 2012, First Wesleyan Church of Battle Creek, MI will host an emergency preparedness training day for high school Athletes in the United States. Over 200 high school athletes from five high schools in Battle Creek will gather at First Wesleyan Church's youth facility to train and become certified in CPR and the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). With the guidance of the PrideCare Ambulance Training Center (Kalamazoo) and support from other instructors from surrounding areas, these athletes will be certified under AHA guidelines and leave prepared to Save A Life!

ATHLETES FOR AMERICA (AFA) was founded in September 2001 by former collegiate and professional athlete, Billy McGehee. AFA's Mission; to educate, train and certify America's Athletes in life saving techniques, and then enroll them into what will become the largest civilian emergency preparedness network in the American history. "Watching the horrific events of September 11, 2001, something changed inside of me. I knew that our Nation had changed forever. I felt that I had to do something to help America become better prepared for emergencies, disasters and even future terrorist strikes. Our citizens would need to learn again how to depend on each other in times of emergencies and disasters. It was clear to me that in order to accomplish this goal; America would need to accelerate the education and training of our citizens in life saving programs. But how do you accomplish this? Then it dawned on me. Who better than our athletes to take on this challenge! This concept was reinforced when I went home to Louisiana the day after Hurricane Katrina hit. People everywhere were dialing 9-11 and simply waiting for help. No one really knew what to do. It was stunning! The idea of using the strength of our athletes and the power of sports to create a safer Nation has now become the foundation of our national initiative. There is no better way to honor the victims of 9-11, and really all victims of emergencies, than to educate and train a whole new generation of first responders that can and will help others in emergency situations" stated McGehee.

Gary Minneman Sr., owner of Sunshine Toyota in Battle Creek and lead sponsor of the event says, "Sunshine Toyota is excited to partner with ATHLETES FOR AMERICA in the upcoming CPR training day, as part of an effort to educate our local athletes in emergency preparedness. Certifying groups of athletes to administer CPR and early defibrillation to those who suffer sudden cardiac arrest will certainly assist in increasing the survival rate of citizens in our community and wherever these students might go."

McGehee continued, "The one thing we all know for sure is that disasters, natural or man-made, and the day to day emergency situations are increasing. Today, we must be prepared to act. Over the past decade our Nation has experienced more emergencies and disasters than ever before. From 9-11-01 to Katrina, to the floods in Nashville, to tornadoes in Joplin and Alabama, earthquakes, wild fires, and mid-west floods, the safety of America will ultimately depend on

how well educated, trained, and prepared our citizens are to handle these emergencies and disasters. We can no longer simply wait for our government to respond. Our athletes are accustomed at training and preparing. They thrive under pressure and in stressful situations. They are natural responders. Please support the AFA National initiative to train all of our young athletes on how to SAVE A LIFE!”

AFA launched its 2010-2011 National Emergency Preparedness Awareness tour in the SPIRIT of AMERICA 1 emergency preparedness tour bus from the United States Military Academy at West Point, NY on September 10, 2010 and then paid respects to the victims of 9-11 by visiting Ground Zero and the Pentagon on September 11th, 2010. Since then, AFA has traveled all across America sharing its National Emergency Preparedness Awareness Network Vision and Mission with athletes, coaches, sports teams and organizations, as well as training collegiate and high school athletes in CPR and AED usage.