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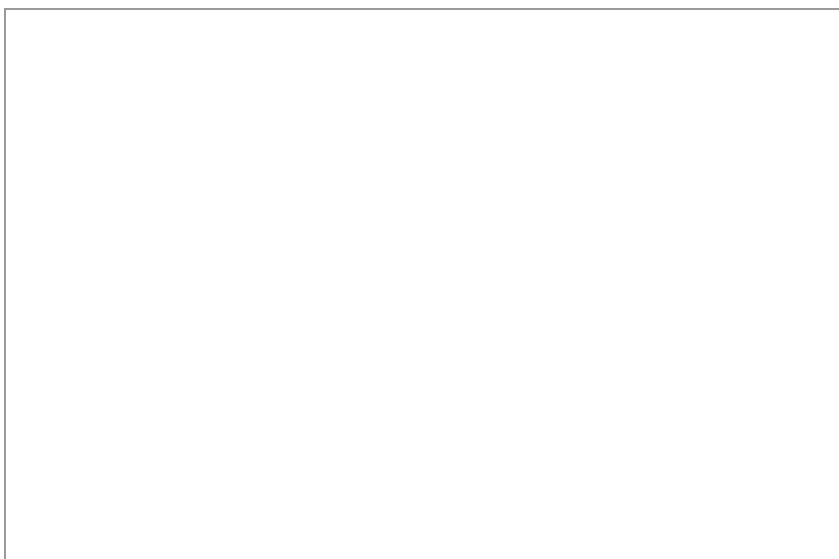
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HYDE PARK

## Hyde Park school still buzzing after Patriots visit, \$10K grant

Posted by Matt Rocheleau November 12, 2010 11:12 AM

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(Donald Rockhead for The Boston Globe)

Patriots QB Tom Brady spoke with city schools Superintendent Carol R. Johnson (far left) and Jeremia Jean, a third-grader at Henry Grew Elementary School.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

After four New England Patriots players, including the team's star quarterback, dropped by for a rally and workout with students at a Hyde Park elementary school Tuesday, administrators there are hoping to feed off that energy in continuing the school's "academics + athletics = achievement" focus.

The Henry Grew School was one of 34 nationwide – the only one in New England – dubbed as a "Super School" last month and chosen to receive a \$10,000 grant through the National Football League's "PLAY 60" program, which focuses on youth health and wellness.

The school's 250 kindergarten through fifth-graders gathered Tuesday for the check presentation by quarterback Tom Brady, wide receiver Deion Branch, safety Brandon Meriweather, and punter Zoltán Meskó, along with the team's owner, Robert Kraft, and Hall of Fame linebacker Andre Tippett, who played his entire 11-season career with the Pats before retiring in 1993.

"We really want to take our time and make sure the money has an impact on the long-term," Principal Ronald Jackson said on Thursday.

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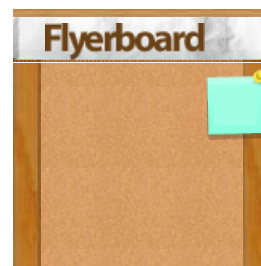
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He said spending the grant will likely be spread out over several years and go toward such areas as before- and after-school programs, nutritional supplies, and fitness equipment. The grant is designated to be used for health and wellness programming or equipment, according to the NFL.

Players also coached the youngsters through 60 minutes of exercise during the "Ultimate NFL Physical Education Class" held at the school's event earlier this week. As an added bonus, the school will keep the equipment used during that class.

"The kids were totally into it and they were all still talking about it," when they returned to a normal day of classes Wednesday, Jackson said.

The principal said athletics, including football, basketball and lacrosse, helped to keep him focused when he was in school.

Along with keeping students fit, being active "really does keep them anchored," by providing a balance to the academic focus inside the classroom, Jackson said.

Around 5,600 schools across the country and 156 in New England entered the NFL's contest and a chance to win the grant along with a visit from a professional NFL player or players. At the beginning of the academic year, schools entered the contest by hosting their own rallies on "Back to Football Friday" to celebrate the start of the NFL season and then submitting photos and essays. One school in each of the league's 32 markets was chosen, along with two at-large winners.

The school on Gordon Avenue entered for its first time this year.

Peter O'Reilly, the NFL's vice president of fan strategy and marketing, said it was chosen for several reasons, including its commitment to the "Back to Football Friday" event and the "way they articulated how important the combination of education and physical activity are to creating well-rounded students."

"They showed they had a real plan in place for how they were going to address that," he added.

When the school found out it had won last month, "we were a little bit stunned," said Jackson.

The Henry Grew School has received a \$10,000 check through professional sports before.

In 2007, Hyde Park native and Red Sox relief pitcher Manny Delcarmen gave a check of that amount to the school through money raised at a charity bowling tournament. The bulk of the money benefited the school's library while \$2,500 was set aside for athletics across the district. That oversized check was presented before a game at Fenway Park.

"NFL PLAY 60," the league's "primary and largest social and corporate responsibility initiative," according to O'Reilly, launched three years ago and focuses on motivating students nationwide to make healthy choices, including being active for at least 60 minutes each day. The initiative is designed to tackle childhood obesity and is implemented through advertisements, online

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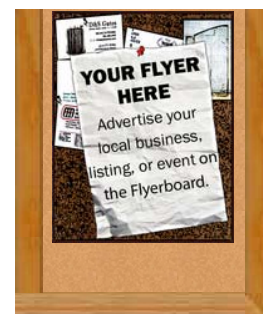


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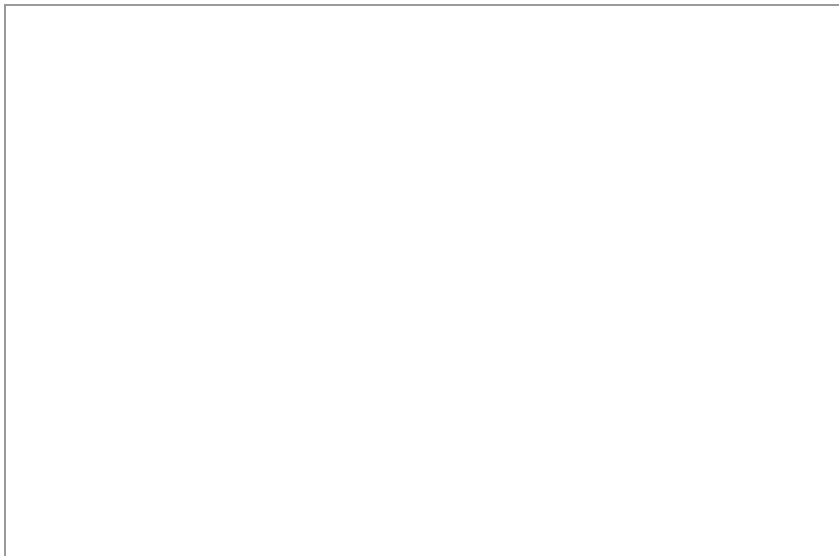
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programs and in-school, after-school and team-based programs.

To see photos from Tuesday's check presentation by Patriots players, [click here](#). To see a NESN video segment on the event, [click here](#). For another segment by NECN, [click here](#).

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(Donald Rockhead for The Boston Globe)

Brady's teammates (from left) Zultan Mesko, Brandon Meriweather, and Deion Branch attended the event.

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