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Classes Begin Monday, September 13

Register at: MBMTwirlyGirls@gmail.com or 704-681-5776

Please leave a message with your information:
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NO REGISTRATION FEES! Melanie Lyon, Brandis Chewning, Melody Goodwin

New Classes Now Offered **BEGINNER BATON FOR AGES 9-14**
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By Middle School Most Girls Say, "I Quit"

Our girls are quitting!
 Did you know that by puberty 51% of all girls will have dropped out of sports and other extracurricular activities they once loved and felt passionate about? More than twice as many girls drop out by age 14 than boys of the same age. In fact, as boys grow older their self esteem increases, but that is not the case for girls. Studies prove that a girl's confidence level hits a crisis mode and they are more likely to quit sports and other challenging activities because they don't believe they are good enough or don't have the right body type.

During this time, building confidence is most crucial for girls who cite a lack of interest, motivation, few role models, lowered self esteem, peer pressure, negative body image and lack of support from parents and friends as reasons they no longer love what they have loved for most of their lives. Additionally, if their friends and close connections do not understand or like the girl's activities of choice, then she can feel awkward and out of sync with her peers. Do those same friends and connections play a significant role in whether or not girls remain on their teams or in their groups? The answer is oftentimes yes. Girls are more likely to choose their friends over their love and passion for sports and activities if their friends are not a part of those activities. At this age girls are more open to being connected with friends and less interested in competing with them.

By middle school, making new friends and finding their place socially is much more strategic for a girl than it was in elementary school. And very often, if your girls are involved in something their peer groups do not enjoy themselves, all it takes is a negative comment here or there to make many girls steer in another direction. And, most times a girl's direction can change from going toward to the finish line to the "I'm finished line" where too many girls say, "I quit! I just want to hang out with my friends."

Parents, guardians, family and even community members should be showing up for girls and watch them as they play and perform. Do you remember how your daughters and girls you knew would ask, "Hey! Will you watch me? Watch me do this. Did you see me? Watch me again. Watch me," they would shout! As young girls they didn't hesitate to ask you to watch them repeatedly...over and over and over again. By the time those same girls reach middle school, many would probably much rather no one watch them at all. Of course, this is not always the case. There are exceptions to all rules, but the overwhelming evidence is that more girls than not will never again show you what they can do.

And so what if they do want to quit, you ask? Shouldn't it be their decision? After all, you won't have to pay for classes or buy equipment. You won't have to travel or take time off to watch her play. She will no longer need to spend time on the practice/playing fields, in classes, gyms, studios, and she will have more time for her studies and friends. Yet overwhelming evidence shows that if girls remain actively involved it will enhance important life skills, including confidence, teamwork, resilience and improved academic performance. Remaining actively involved on teams and in groups can also positively impact future career choices and their success in those choices. For those reasons alone these findings should be given our undivided attention and demand our commitment to change. So teachers and coaches surely have their work cut out for them. But it should not end there. The most prominent where place girls learn about belonging to a group or team is in their own homes and within their own families. So it is only by enlisting everyone involved in their lives that girls quitting can be lessened and the problem rectified.

Seven out of ten girls quitting is too many. It is an outcry. Show up for them. Watch them. Go out and enjoy them like you do boys football. Head to their fields, courts and gyms. Go to the theaters, studios, parades and shows. Watch their games, matches, competitions, exhibitions and even their practices. Hopefully the next time a girls says, "I quit," it won't be shrugged off or chalked up to lack of or a change in interests or changes in her friend groups. Seven out of ten girls is too many to lose. With a few probing questions and a concern for this alarming trend we can help reduce quitting and in time defeat it...one brave girl at a time.

By Melanie Lyon

Toys for Tots "Christmas in July" Fundraiser, Senior Prom is Saturday

The Toys for Tots "Christmas in July" fundraiser will be held this Saturday, July 31 at the Lockhart-Taylor Center, beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the form of a Senior Prom. The theme of the event is "New Year, New Beginnings in July." Guests from all over North and South Carolina are invited.

Toys for Tots Coordinator Vancine Sturdivant stated, "I am truly excited and looking forward to the outpouring of participation and support from citizens."

Sturdivant continued, "The reason I began this as a Senior Prom was because the prom was an event my spouse and I never shared together. Even though we chaperoned the high school senior proms, we never went to one together as youth. I began to ask different couples if they attended their senior prom with the person they are currently with or married to and the answer would most often be no. I felt this would be a great way to bring all these fantastic couples together. To get dressed in their gowns and tuxedos, look their soul mates in the eyes and just enjoy each other. Each couple or single person, whether married or not, are to give me a song they want to be dedicated to them at the fundraiser prom, and they are required to get on the floor and dance!"

DJ Leon Gatewood will play each request while Vancine recognizes the couples and calls them on the floor to dance. Last year everyone joined in. One of the highlights of the last Senior Prom was the dancing of Mr. and Mrs. Carl and Carol Gibson. Participants at the prom ranged in age from late 20s to their late 80s - who we called our "Golden Girls." A special table will be reserved for them.

Photographers will be on-site to capture every moment of the event and everyone can order pictures or get a photo that night.

Door prizes and gifts will be awarded.

Tickets can be purchased from the Toys for Tots Executive Board, Vancine Sturdivant, Elissa Michelle Sturdivant, Sheriff Landric Reid, Playaz Elite Motorcycle Club, Barbara Thomas, Erica Greene, Shunda Brown, Diane Carelock, Sabronia Dows, Showtime Tattoo Parlor, William "Bugga" Sturdivant and Sheila Chambers. For more information call Vancine Sturdivant at 704-848-4412.

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