



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FORMER FOOTBALLER IS FAYETTE'S FEBRUARY 'FACE'

Uniontown, PA – As the February “face” in the Fayette County PR Initiative’s monthly “Faces and Places” series, former NFL player William James is dedicated to helping county youth reach their full potential.

A Brownsville native who later moved to Uniontown and graduated from Laurel Highlands High School, James found success as an NFL cornerback while playing for the New York Giants, Philadelphia Eagles, Jacksonville Jaguars, San Francisco 49ers, Buffalo Bills and Detroit Lions.

These days, James has found a new kind of success as the founder of Team Humanity, a nonprofit organization geared primarily toward student athletes. He returned to Fayette County to launch the project through Brownsville Area School District, before expanding into other southwestern Pennsylvania schools.

“When I graduated and left in ‘96, I realized just how much of the world I didn’t know,” James said. “The seed was already planted to come back here someday and speak to the youth about the many opportunities for them in the world - to try to inspire them to achieve.”

Through Team Humanity, James inspires area teenagers through a series of positive projects, including the Team Humanity Games, an inclusive athletic competition which encourages students to remain active and healthy while promoting positive life choices.

“If we give them something to do that’s uplifting, I believe we can create great change,” James said. James also partners with the Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette on Team Humanity Athletic Apparel, a project which allows students to design, create, model, market and sell their own clothing to raise money for community service and other passion projects.

“Through Team Humanity Athletic Apparel, we are harnessing the collective power of athletes to impact youth in underserved communities,” James wrote on his website, www.shopteamhumanity.com. “Together we are spreading a positive message to humanity and impacting countless kids just by doing what we love - playing sports and looking good while doing it.”

Team Humanity’s initiatives also include establishment of community empowerment centers, which are geared toward providing teenagers education resources through engaging experiences. The centers teach students to use community resources, such as libraries and youth centers, in positive ways.

James has impacted thousands of students through his programming by keeping them involved in their schools and communities. With Team Humanity to turn to, students are less likely to engage in potentially dangerous activities.

“The best part is seeing the kids set goals and actually achieve them,” he said. “It’s very rewarding for me to know I could help direct them and give them confidence. I like letting them know that even though they’re from small towns, they can achieve great things if they apply themselves.”

Countless organizations, including the Pennsylvania National Guard, have sponsored or partnered with Team Humanity since its inception and, thanks to James’ leadership, the list keeps growing. As a result, his influence continues to expand.

This summer, James said, he plans to open a sports academy in downtown Brownsville, complete with an indoor turf field and other amenities. The academy will be designed to serve students from kindergarten through graduation, offering an environment they can always feel safe and happy in.

“Even if they don’t go to the NFL or NBA, it will at least give them goals to aspire to and many of them will at least go to college,” he said. “There’s a lot of talent here being wasted and I believe we can have a much greater impact on the youth if we get them on the right track early.”

Moving forward, James said he will continue to be part of the growth in both downtown Brownsville and Fayette County as a whole.

“When I first came back, there was almost nothing downtown and I started meeting with people who had been here for years. I came in and saw something different with fresh eyes and it didn’t seem like such a big challenge to make some changes,” he said. “They’ve now got new buildings going up for new businesses coming in, an amphitheatre and stage, and even some of the buildings considered black eyes in the community have been closed, so there’s more talk of people coming into town.

“I don’t take any credit for all of that, but I know Team Humanity has been a part of that positive change. As long as there’s hope there, people will take notice and see the real effect we have.”

For more information on Team Humanity, visit www.shopteamhumanity.com or search “Team Humanity Athletic Apparel” on Facebook.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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