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Boys and Girls Clubs: Triple Play Program
A game plan for the mind, body and soul

Unhealthy lifestyles among children in Georgia have reached epidemic levels, and the health risks associated with their unhealthy lifestyles can lead to serious physical and emotional consequences for Georgia's children. Young people currently reside in environments that de-emphasize good health and nutrition, while reinforcing poor eating habits and inactivity. These circumstances not only pose health risks to children, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, along with low self-esteem, but also burden our health, academic, and economic resources. By third grade nearly a quarter of Georgia's children are considered obese, and almost half of children ages 10 -14 fail to meet the national recommended level of physical activity. I have had the opportunity to make a difference through the Boys and Girls Clubs: Triple Play Program, a national dynamic wellness program aimed at youth between the ages of 6 to 18, that teaches youth how eating right...keeping fit...and forming positive relationships, adds up to a healthier lifestyle.

My volunteer efforts with the Boys and Girls Club of Metro Atlanta has been twofold: I teach dance classes, a recommended form of physical activity, and I am also involved as a teacher and role model in their Triple Play Program, which teaches youth about nutrition, exercise, and teamwork to help them make positive food choices, enjoy sustained physical activity, and develop a sense of self-reliance. I have also introduced healthy food snacks in my dance classes, and I have begun to see the results of our efforts to motivate these children towards a healthier lifestyle. For the last three years, as principal soloist with Ballet Pensacola, I participated weekly in their Discover Dance Program, a national organization focused on exposing youth to the arts and other social issues, such as leading a healthier lifestyle, and ways to be more physically active, like dancing. To date, this program has allowed me to perform and speak to over 75,000 youth, using the importance of my own healthy lifestyle as a ballet dancer. In addition, I have taken college courses to expand my knowledge in nutrition. My experiences with Discover Dance have been a beneficial teaching tool with the Triple Play Program.

Georgia's Lieutenant Governor, Casey Cagle, has undertaken a program called the Healthy Kids Challenge in Georgia. This program challenges educational leaders, including teachers, to help create healthier environments for our children by guiding participants to resources to help them make healthy changes in nutrition, physical activity, and education. Lieutenant Governor Cagle endorsed my work with the Boys and Girls Clubs: Triple Play Program, as another positive impact on the health crisis facing our children in Georgia.

Edward Everett Hale said: "I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something, and I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do." I am fully aware that I don't have all the answers or the tools to resolve the serious health issues associated with our children in Georgia. The job of Miss Atlanta has enabled me to expand my work with the Boys and Girls Club, by promoting the principles of the Triple Play Program to schools, civic organizations, and community groups throughout Metro Atlanta. I want to do more...and the job of Miss Georgia will provide me the tools and opportunity to expand the mission of the Triple Play Program throughout Georgia. No, I cannot do this alone, but I have the passion and experience to make a difference. I would be honored to have the opportunity to educate and motivate the children of Georgia to lead healthier, more productive lives..."but I can do something".
