

Kids Want to Kick Butt

Childhood overweight and obesity rates are rising in Canada. Obesity rates in children have almost tripled in the last 25 years. Approximately 26% of Canadian children ages 2-17 years old are currently overweight or obese. Obesity rates continue to increase into adulthood.

- Approximately 1/3 of normal weight 20 year olds will become overweight within 8 years
- Approximately 1/3 of overweight 20 year olds will become obese within 8 years

If this trend continues, in 20 years we can expect 70% of the 35-44 year olds in Canada to be overweight or obese vs. 57% who are currently overweight or obese (Katzmarzyk and Janssen, 2004). This tech generation is hooked into their computers, iPods, video games etc. and gone are the days of hide and seek, pick up hockey and baseball games.

This summer I have had the privilege of working every Wednesday at Camp B'nai Brith, a summer camp in Lantier, north of Montreal. My mission, to teach Bootcamp fitness classes to senior kids aged 13-18 and then junior kids 9-12.

I was very excited, having taught kickboxing in elementary schools as an extra curricular activity with much success. The activity at Camp B'nai Brith is part of "Options" a program every Wednesday where the kids get to choose what they would like to do from a list of assorted activities. I was not certain how it would be received since they were not obligated to attend, and exercising may not be the choice for kids away from their parents and not forced upon them. Each class was limited to 40 participants. Imagine my surprise when 40 bright faces showed up ready to kick butt!

I arrived in my army attire, blew the whistle and we did push ups, squats, burpees, jumping jacks and lots of drills and games. They loved it. One boy from the junior side showed me how he could do over 30 push ups and he did them perfectly I may add! Boys, girls, and staff all worked hard and asked for more! I was so impressed. What did I learn from this experience? Our kids are not lazy! They want to exercise, challenge their bodies and compete. It just has to be fun.

I go up every Wednesday throughout the summer and so far each week has been "sold out". One little girl around, 10 years old came up to me after her class and said "Phyl, what if can't get this option next week?" Wow. What more can I say.

The last class we even got into a discussion about nutrition. They asked intelligent questions and wanted informed answers on what they ate daily. Andie Stelman, a camper aged 13, approached me and said that since our nutrition chat she has changed the way she eats.

The attitude of the kids is so positive, the staff asked if I could be part of the camp program, they want me to come up and stay for the summer! That is not possible but I will be offering Bootcamp classes in the West Island for kids and adults.

If you have never done Bootcamp it is a total body workout combining strength, core and cardiovascular training. It is a great fat burning workout and challenges your body and mind! You do not have to be advanced to participate, everyone works at their own fitness level and you will see yours increase in no time.

I look forward each week to going up north to teach my Bootcamp class and watch these kids kick butt and let me tell you, they do!

Phyllis Frost / FIT BODY BY PHYL