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## Lift for Life Gym + Scott Air Force Base = A Winning Combination!



A-ten-tion! This January we had some very special volunteers at Lift For Life Gym that had a wonderful impact on our youth. SSgt. Chris Adams and a team from Scott Air Force Base joined forces with the Gym as part of a military participation program that brings uplifting and productive volunteer opportunities to military base members as a way to reach out to the community.

SSgt. Chris Adams, the Non Commissioned Council's Community Chair Person, sent Lift For Life Gym an invitation to participate in their program: "I thought it would be a unique and different opportunity for the military to take part in." Needless to say, we gladly accepted the invitation and our youth couldn't have been happier with the decision.

So what makes Lift For Life Gym unique and different? SSgt. Chris Adams noted that the energy and enthusiasm of our youth is what really made their volunteer experience worthwhile. The military team started off by mingling and mentoring with the kids, speaking about the military, careers, and the physical fitness programs that are offered. The youth also participated in a Q & A session where they were able to ask questions about life in the military.

It was here that our youth members put the military team to the test. One of the unique traits of our Gym

is the age range of our youth members. The military team was able to mentor some of our elementary aged youth and answer questions like, "How heavy is your equipment you have to wear," but they also had the opportunity to interact with our high school aged youth and answer questions like, "What's it like to have a career in the military?" Despite the difference in age range and types of questions, the Scott Air Force Base team answered their questions seamlessly.

SSgt. Chris Adams stated, "Afterwards, a military style physical fitness session was held that everyone enjoyed. Everyone was happy and enjoyed themselves and committed to staying involved." The team was most impressed with the energy of our youth during the fitness session.

SSgt. Adams described the Gym as active: "The energy of the kids was nonstop and to see everyone mentoring and enjoying themselves was great."

After just one visit, the Scott Air Force Base team committed themselves to volunteering with the Gym once every month. Not only did our newest volunteers impact our youth, but it seems that our youth impacted them. Thank you for your continued support!

## Members of Team Lift For Life Gym Reach New Heights

Team Lift For Life Gym had an incredible 2014 season, bringing home 15 medals at the Youth Nationals and 12 medals at the International Youth Invitational at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs.

Our team is back at it again this year! In February, two of our members (Ashley and Jerrone) competed at the National Junior Weightlifting Championships in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. This meet would decide who would be invited to a team of 8 weightlifters selected to be on the USA Youth World Traveling Team for ages 18 and under. The team is traveling to Lima, Peru in April for its next meet at the Youth World Championships.

Ashley, a 15 year old team Lift For Life Gym weightlifter, competed in the 58kg weight class, lifting an incredible 54 Snatch and 68 C&J for a 122 Total! Jerrone, a 13 year old Lift For Life Gym weightlifter, competed in the 50kg weigh class for 14 and 15 year olds. He set three of the American Records in his weight class, breaking the previous snatch record by 7kg and the



previous clean and Jerk by 6kg! His lifts were as follows: 71kg Snatch, 90kg C&J, and 161 Total. He is able to lift 90lbs over his own body weight! Jerrone had such an incredible performance in Oklahoma that he was invited onto the USA Youth World Traveling Team!

Jerrone will be leaving the first week of April to head to the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs for a one-week training camp. Then, he will be headed to Lima, Peru to compete in what will no doubt be the biggest meet of his life.

All travel expenses for Jerrone's trip are not paid for by Team USA. Donations are being collected through our GoFundMe campaign to help send Jerrone and Coach Jimmy to Peru. To make a donation, visit <http://www.gofundme.com/eziugc>

Jerrone and Team Lift For Life Gym have had an incredible weightlifting season and have gone further than we ever could have imagined. We are grateful to all who have helped and supported the team throughout the year.

## Volunteer Group Spotlight: Wells Fargo Advisors

Imagine being surrounded by an intense, fun energy. Imagine seeing nothing but smiling and happy faces. Imagine a whirlwind of children. This, according to our new friends at Wells Fargo Advisors, perfectly describes their experience at Lift For Life Gym: "We were really taken by the 40-50 kids playing and laughing in a safe environment. Very touching."

This past September was the first time that John Flood along with a volunteer team from Wells Fargo Advisors prepared a meal for our youth as part of our Meal-A-Month program. "After visiting the Lift for Life Gym we really felt the mission was important and we could see from the energy of the kids and the staff that this would be a nice fit for our time and talents."



A few years ago it was discovered that our members were often not receiving proper nutrition at home, relying on Lift For Life Gym snacks for their evening meal. It was then that we created our Evening Café, with the mission of providing free, nutritious meals each night to our members. We knew we would need a lot of help to accomplish our goal, and volunteer teams like the Wells Fargo Advisors Group provide much more than a helping hand. They keep the program running.

"The Meal-A-Month is both a great way to contribute and also be involved at the Gym, and it provides us with an opportunity to grow as a Team by contributing to the community." The Wells Fargo Advisors team has gotten involved in other ways, too. They attended one of our Young Friends events where they collected and donated gifts for our annual Holiday Drive!

Yet, their fondest memory of Lift For Life Gym is the thanks they receive from our youth: "LFLG has a sign that says, 'Always be Grateful...'" It was very impressive to have many kids thank us for taking the time to prepare a meal and spend some time at the Gym."

The sign that we display proudly at the Gym serves as a reminder for both the youth and staff at the gym. When you're surrounded by 50 energetic children, it's easy to get swept up in the whirlwind of fun, but it's important to remember to be grateful.

Many thanks to John Flood and the Wells Fargo Advisors team for their continued support!

## For the Love of Basketball

At Lift For Life Gym, we are extremely lucky to have passionate, caring, and dedicated volunteers. In fact, many of our volunteers have been involved with our organization for years. For Coach KG, this is the case.

Coach KG first heard about Lift For Life Gym, "So many years ago that it's hard to remember," through her Sister-in-Law, Cynthia who manages our Evening Café. Coach KG decided to get involved with the gym in the best way she knew how, basketball. Her interest in the game has taken her through all aspects of basketball including player, official, and now coach. She helps coach the Lift For Life 14 and under boys basketball team.

Her love of basketball, she stated, drove her to the gym. "I still have a lot of love for the game, and by coaching the kids, I get to do something I love and also help the kids learn discipline." Although she is no stranger to the game, this is her first coaching experience. Despite her newness to teaching, she has a keen eye for the different and unique abilities of the players: "Each of the boys bring their different styles. They are very competitive and vocal, but they don't mind a challenge."

Her favorite aspect of coaching is watching the boys grow over time and apply what they've learned. "One of the reasons I love basketball is because it teaches you discipline, both on and off the court. That's one of the most important things about the sport and for the kids."

Coach KG has been an incredible coach thus far and we are extremely happy to have her on our team. She says, "I just can't get away from the game," but we sure are glad she can't! Many thanks to Coach KG for her continued and dedicated support!



## Education Is Our Passport to the Future

At Lift For Life Gym we strive to prepare our youth for life beyond the Gym. One option they have is to pursue an education at a college or university. Yet, the youth we work with are often faced with challenges that prevent them from having the same opportunities as other youth their age.

The gym helps encourage knowledge by providing homework assistance within our learning center. We also offer a teen transition program as well as tutoring and mentoring. In addition to the opportunities we provide at the gym, we have created a partnership with local colleges and universities to take our youth on college tours.

On Saturday, February 8th, Twenty-five of our members loaded up on a bus and trekked through the snow for an inside tour of Columbia College. They were able to meet faculty and talk about college life and the career paths they may be interested in. They also met coaches and student athletes to talk about what it's like to be a student athlete. The last stop on the tour included watching the Columbia Cougars take on Benedictine University in Men's Basketball.

By touring colleges in the area, our youth are able to explore the options for their future education, make important and lasting connections, and see that college is a real possibility for them.

Thank you to Columbia College for the overwhelming kindness and support!



## Donations made from 7/1/2014- 12-31/2014

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### Gift of Stock

At Lift For life Gym, gifts of all kinds are used to bring services to the youth that we serve. One option is a gift of stock. A stock gift to Lift For Life Gym can help bring fitness, nutrition and a healthy lifestyle for St. Louis City children. To make a gift of stock or for more information, please contact us at 314-227-7302.

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Thank you to all that gave anonymously to our indiegogo campaign! Your contributions allowed our youth weightlifting team to earn 14 medals at the USAW National Championships!

**Note:** We apologize for any mistakes or omissions. If you made a donation during this time period and your name is not listed, or if the information is incorrect, please contact the Development Manager, Lauren Sauer, at 314-227-7302.

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## 2nd Annual Hops Run 5K

Hop into some fun this Easter with the 2nd Annual Hops Run 5K held in the Lower Muny Parking Lot in Forest Park on April 4th at 9:00am. Begin your 5K down the "Hops" trail and stop at each station to complete a unique challenge. Craft brew will be available to taste from Urban Chestnut Brewing Company, Boulevard Brewing, Modern Brewery, and New Belgium Brewing Company after the race and will be paired with a breakfast dish. Those under 21 will be given a beverage with their breakfast. For our younger runners, we feature a Kids Bunny Run with fun obstacles and small prizes at each station.

### Register early to save!

\$50.00 per adult Mar 16th - Apr 3rd

\$55.00 per adult on race day

Packet Pickup will take place on April 1st at The Urban Chestnut Brewing Company Grove location from 5-7pm. Runners who attend the pickup can take advantage of \$5.00 beer specials during that time. Anyone who picks up their packets during this time will be entered into a drawing for 2 MicroRun and Microfest combo ticket packages good for the Saturday afternoon session.

For volunteer or registration information, please visit our website [hopsrunstl.org](http://hopsrunstl.org) or like our Facebook page!



## Cheers to 20 Years!



2015 marks the 20th anniversary of St. Louis Microfest, Lift For Life Gym's largest annual fundraiser. Last year, the festival pulled in over \$6,000 patrons and over 125 breweries from across the nation!

This year's event will take place on May 1st and 2nd in Forest Park! Each year, the beer tasting festival features hundreds of craft and international beers at three different session times, over two days. Attendees have the opportunity to sample brews from both local St. Louis breweries and non-local breweries from across the country. The festival also includes live music, food vendors, a Brewer's Olympics, and live brewer and chef demonstrations.

If you're looking to upgrade your ticket, you can purchase a ticket for the VIP tent and enjoy a delicious dinner and dessert combo while enjoying specialty brews exclusive to the VIP tent. The newest addition to the festival is the MicroRun, which is currently in its second year. Patrons of the MicroRun take part in a short 2 mile run and afterwards enjoy a one hour tasting session sponsored by Sam Adams.

Each year, we rely on over 500 volunteers to help us with the festival. Volunteer signup information is now available. If you're interested in helping, visit our website for more information.

Tickets are now on sale! For more information, please visit our website [stlmicrofest.org](http://stlmicrofest.org). Be sure to follow us on Facebook for exclusive ticket offers and information on all things Microfest – [www.facebook.com/STLMicrofest](http://www.facebook.com/STLMicrofest).

## Get Connected!

