

fit **ATLANTA**™

HEALTH & WELLNESS MAGAZINE

Spring 2010

KATHY BETTY
DREAMing
BIG

Atlanta Dream's
new owner discusses
her new job, life and
the upcoming season



WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL in Atlanta

Wheelchair Athletes Participate In The HOOPATLANTA™ Classic by Nikki Wilson



Typically developing children have countless opportunities to participate in competitive sports, whether it is during recess while playing a game of pick-up basketball, or in an organized league. Although participation of children with special needs in adaptive sports programs has increased since the enactment of the American with Disabilities Act in 1990, 19 years later, disabled athletes are still often excluded from mainstream sports activities! Being a member of a team has numerous benefits including, but not limited to opportunities for social interaction, improved physical fitness and health, developing discipline and learning to work as a team.

Dream Makers Youth Foundation (www.dream-makersyouthfoundation.org) has been dedicated to eliminating this disparity since their inception in 2004. Through their S.T.A.R.S. tennis and basketball programs, they provide year-round fitness opportunities for children with intellectual delays, and by hosting two annual integrated sports events, they not only provide opportunities for wheelchair athletes to compete, but also expose their community to the abilities, rather than the disabilities, of disabled athletes.

One of these events was Dream Makers' 'Bring the Heat' 3-on-3 basketball tournament, with wheelchair and able-bodied divisions. Throughout the years, although the tournament grew, the wheelchair division grew faster than the able-bodied, so with limited numbers of able-bodied spectators, its level of community exposure remained small.

With hopes of exponentially increasing their impact on the community, DMYF has teamed up with fitATLANTA Health & Wellness Magazine to integrate HOOPATLANTA™ Classic (www.hoopatlanta.com) so the talents of both able-bodied and wheelchair athletes will be on display. This partnership will definitely be a win-win situation for both organizations. HOOPATLANTA™ Classic will grow to become one of the most anticipated tournaments throughout the Southeast – by both wheelchair and able-bodied ballers, and Dream Makers Youth Foundation will meet its objective of exposing the community to the abilities of disabled athletes – a perfect combination, whether runnin' or rollin'! #23