

East Brunswick school takes top honors in district fitness challenge

By Jennifer Engelhart
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EAST BRUNSWICK — The challenge was to discover the fittest students in the Middlesex County Vocational and Technical School District through a special program with an Olympic twist.

Olympian Joetta Clark Diggs presented the host school with top honors during an awards ceremony Wednesday at the East Brunswick Vocational and Technical School. Among the four participating schools, The Academy at Woodbridge took second, Perth Amboy Vo-Tech secured third place and Piscataway Vo-Tech came in fourth.

Sponsored by Em-PoWER Somerset and Horizon NJ Health, students participating in the Joetta Clark Diggs Fitness Challenge were challenged to excel in push-ups, sit-ups, standing broad jumps, rope-jumping and a mental challenge. The training process began in January and the competition ended March 14.

Jeff Bicsko, principal at the East Brunswick Vocational and Technical School, said it was an honor to have Diggs work with students in the system.

“To have someone as influential and supportive as Joetta, who exemplifies the vision to empower students to make healthier choices, is what this whole competition is about,” Bicsko said.

With nearly 400 students participating, Diggs said her team put in a lot of work to get the students ready for the challenge.

Diggs provided students with four trainers, including Crystal Boyd, Olivia Roman, Reggie Lampley and Janine Davis. The four focused on getting the students prepared for the March 14 challenge.

“I am really proud of our students, they worked really hard,” said Stephanie Pegues, a physical education and health teacher with East Brunswick. “It was competitive yet fun, and it was nice to concentrate on fitness and have our students be part of this community.”

Diggs, in her speech, said that this challenge would not have been possible had it not been for its two sponsors.

“It means everything for Horizon NJ Health to sponsor an event like this,” said Tyesha Pichardo, manager, Community Health Marketing and Communications with Horizon NJ Health. “We promote health and wellness, and this challenge teaches them out how to eat healthier and create an overall healthy lifestyle.”

Brenda M. Esler, executive director with Em-PoWER Somerset, said the organization was grateful for the opportunity to partner with Diggs and Horizon NJ Health.

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