

Brain Bites – Think Olympic!! March 2010

Category – Personal Best

Although it was sad to see it end, the closing ceremonies of the Olympics hosted in Vancouver, B.C, left us with such a wonderful message of hope and inspiration.

The Canadian Olympians, trainers and organizers made the promise to ensure that sport and play would be available to ALL Canadian children and that they wouldn't rest until it happened.

It seems that those who have spent years in the field of fitness and sport, understand firsthand the importance and fulfillment of moving our bodies!

In many ways, professional athletes are role models and heroes to all of us, especially young children. They perform skills that require exceptional levels of strength, flexibility, agility and endurance. Their focus, dedication and expertise is inspiring and motivating to us all! They encourage us to put forth a greater effort and commitment in our own lives and the goals we'd like to pursue. They raise the bar!

While not all of us are on a path to become extra-ordinary athletes, the joy and benefits of movement, play and sport are something we all need in our lives, at every age.

High level competition may not even be appealing to everyone, however achieving one's P.B. 'Personal Best', is certainly fulfilling and supports one's personal development. During the Olympics where the competitive spirit runs tremendously high, there was still an emphasis on Personal Best. When an athlete didn't make the podium, the announcers would frequently make mention of it, if they beat their own prior score.

Right in our own community, former Olympic rower, Silken Laumann is fostering an "Active Kids Movement" which is committed to increasing the number of children playing in Canada, and reducing the obesity rate in kids. Her book, "Child's Play" is about the importance of movement and play for children.

Not only does movement get us physically fit (energy in - *balances with* - energy out), we also improve our mental acuity, emotional balance and overall well- being.

Silken also distinguishes between two types of play, structured and unstructured.

Structured play, such as organized sports like soccer and hockey have guidelines and rules that must be followed. This appeals to the left brain and is responsible for details, linear and logical methods.

Unstructured play, forges the growth of our right brain, which is connected with our intuition, spontaneity and feelings and allows children to develop their creativity, imagination and inner resources.

To develop our whole brain potential and achieve cognitive balance, we need to activate both hemispheres.

Cognitive Fitness tools such as Brain Gym® meet this need by stimulating our 3-dimensional movement patterns in structured and unstructured ways, relating to our whole brain development. Offered as a series of 26 simple, fun, easy and effective movements that can be done as they are taught, or in creative and fun variations that are customized by the individual and their needs.

Just like many Canadian Olympians are ambassadors to get children across our country moving, it also echoes the words of Paul Dennison, award winning learning expert, and founder of Brain Gym® International, who says, “no child left behind”. ***Dr. Dennison uses movement to successfully foster healthy academic, social and emotional growth in children and adults across the world.***

It has been scientifically proven that movement, hydration and environmental conditions during childhood affect the brain both in a positive and negative ways, depending how we are nourished, or lack thereof. These early affects on the Brain set the pattern for life-long learning and set our standards for personal best success.

Children who are stressed operate from the lower brain stem and therefore are not able to control their emotions and access higher level thinking.

Similarly, children who grow up in a nurturing environment with lots of activity, hydration and proper nutrition, have 20 to 30 percent more brain development and can self-manage more effectively.

Stress factors can exist at home, school and the workplace for individuals, of all ages. Thankfully cognitive fitness tools such as Brain Gym can support the individual in rewiring and utilizing one’s whole brain potential at any age, regardless of their prior experience.

Brain Gym® movements free the innate ability to learn and function at top efficiency. **When the body and mind work as one, the individual performs with less stress and freely takes action using greater mental and physical potential.** The movements are effective in clearing physical, mental and emotional blocks and one can realize the ease and joy of meeting new challenges!

Come join us for our upcoming training and realize the inner Olympian in you!!

Jill Hewlett and Sharon Todd are both Licensed Brain Gym® Trainers. Their company, Brain Works Global Inc., train clients on how to maximize their learning potential while working in conjunction with their individual goals.

They provide keynotes, in house training, and sponsored events to a wide range of organizations, schools and the community. For more information go to <http://www.brainworksglobal.com> or call 905.830.6902.