

Pickleball Plays Pivotal Role

in Community Outreach Program



Group Activities Meaningful to Everyone (G.A.M.E.) is a community-based nonprofit focused on strengthening individuals, families and entire communities through pickleball. Founder Taylor Taylor, who has a background in tennis and a master's in clinical social work, discovered pickleball in 2016. Immediately realizing the many benefits of the sport, Taylor decided to combine her love of sports and her "calling" to community outreach, resulting in G.A.M.E.

Every community is affected by adversity. Research has come to identify Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as a leading indicator of toxic stress and physical illness. ACEs can include, but are not exclusive to, addiction, physical and/or emotional abuse, exposure to mental illness, domestic violence and more. The proactive process of identifying and normalizing ACEs helps to reduce the effects of stress (a response that can occur when a child experiences strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity) on the nervous system and promotes healthy development. Exercise and socialization help to support those experiencing ACEs both physically and emotionally. Therefore, as a therapeutic technique, G.A.M.E. integrates this research into the fabric of pickleball.

Pickleball is a unique sport due to the intergenerational nature, accessibility based on low cost of equipment and attire, and the minimal amount of space required to play coupled with the

relative ease to proficiency. As a result, it is a natural sport to support positive family interaction and healthy social and emotional development. In a G.A.M.E. class, children and adults of all ages participate in pickleball while learning about integrity, empathy, "serve and return" communication, stress management, goal achievement, and the importance of love and respect for self and others as well as having fun, bonding and, most importantly, building confidence. G.A.M.E. is also using this strategy to work with the Special Needs population to increase social skills and coordination.

Taylor and her volunteers, who are primarily members of the MidSouth Pickleball Club (also founded by Taylor) are currently working in schools, parenting places, community centers, churches and parking lots to share the benefits of pickleball beyond the courts.

All people in every community across the country deserve improved mental health, increased resiliency, decreased physical disease and stronger overall wellness. Pickleball is making a major impact in the lives of many—G.A.M.E. uses this wonderful game to take that impact to another level!

For more information about Group Activities Meaningful to Everyone (G.A.M.E.), go to www.aceandgame.com or email Taylor Taylor at taylor@aceandgame.com. •