

# On Track for Greatness



**Olympian and Pro Football Hall of Fame Players:** FRONT L-R: Fred Thompson, Roy Jefferson, John Gilliam, Bruce Harper, Norman Tate BACK L-R: David Micahnik, JJ Clark, Mark Slawson, Sam Graddy, Jack Pierce



**Dr. Joe Clark, Joetta's Father and subject of the movie "Lean on Me"**

**L-R: Dee Dee Nathan, Jearl Miles-Clark, Joetta Clark Diggs, Hazel Clark Riley, Dee Dee Trotter, BACK L-R: Sharon Seagrave, Dr. Lillian Greene-Chamberlain, Cheryl Toussaint, Sharrieffa Barksdale, Karen Dennis, Candy Young**



**L-R: Dr. Joetta Clark Diggs and Joe Clark**



**LR: Joetta Geniuses: Pamela Matthew Technology HS in Newark; Joetta Clark Diggs; Imani Evans, Ewing HS; Katherine Hernandez, Technology HS in Newark; (Not shown in the Photo) Terrance Malif, Wall HS; Carnardo Waugh, Plainfield HS**

## Former Olympian Moves From Running On The Field To Running A Successful Foundation

BY JEAN NASH WELLS

**A**re you aware that New Jersey has its own four-time Olympian? That's right, I said four-time Olympian. Joetta Clark Diggs, a 1988, 1992, 1996 and 2000 Olympian, is considered to be the most prolific 800m runner of all time. Clark Diggs has been inducted in to the National Track and Field Hall of Fame in 2009 and authored her first book, *Joetta's "P" Principles For Success*.

She learned at an early age to be fearless, thanks to her parents, Jetta Clark and educator Dr. Joe Clark, the inspiration for the hit movie *Lean on Me*. Ranked in the top ten in the world nine times, Joetta has won over nine championship titles and ranked among the top ten in America for over 20 years. The former captain of the U.S. Women's 2000 Olympic Track & Field Team, through commitment, determination and ambition she achieved greatness at a young age and in turn works to instill those attributes in aspiring youth and challenges them to realize their dreams.

Track has been great for Joetta, or shall I say Joetta has been great for track? Either way, Joetta is giving to children what track and field has given her. Thinking about the gifts she received as she was taught about health and fitness prompted her to create a foundation whose mission is to promote involvement in athletics for girls and boys in grades K-12. The Joetta Clark Diggs Sports Foundation, Inc. is committed to teaching good health and the positive work ethic associated with sports, as well as introducing numerous opportunities in the sports and entertainment industry.

One of the projects under her fitness umbrella includes a scholarship program named "Eligible". To participate, students must be graduating seniors who ex-

hibit track and field athleticism, have achieved academic excellence (3.0 GPA or above) and show involvement in community service.

Other programs include Head 2 Toe Fitness© (H2T), the foundation's most popular, which is dedicated to helping children and their families embrace fitness and nutrition and introducing life skills that will stay with them.

The foundation also conducts health awareness seminars and track and field camps. Funded through grants and the help of numerous corporations, companies, and individuals, the foundation has been able to provide seven free programs on its own. Joetta believes that today, when the obesity rate among children is extremely high, these programs are needed more than ever.

In September 2010, The Foundation, held its Fifth Annual Sports Extravaganza at the Bridgewater Marriott in New Jersey. Presented by Surre, Goldberg & Henry Associates and this year's grant sponsors Horizon NJ Health, Sanofi-aventis, Johnson & Johnson, Prudential, State Farm and Razac, the Sports Extravaganza was an event not to be forgotten. Numerous Olympians and professional athletes attended, believing in and in support of their friend for such a worthy cause. One of the highlights of the evening was listening to the Joetta Geniuses' comments about receiving this \$1000.00.

Let's applaud Joetta Clark Diggs for taking the initiative to help instill the power of achievement, discipline and focus in our children through athleticism, and including the entire family to encourage change for the better.

Her mantra seems to be making its mark on the young people she reaches. "In order to be successful, you must have the capacity to be disciplined, fearless and focused," she says. ■