



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **FORMER NFL PLAYERS HOST FOOTBALL CLINIC FOR LOCAL FOSTER YOUTH**



Former NFL Players Robert Smith and Twan Russell kick off football camp with a pep talk



John Offerdahl, Former Dolphins player; Drew Greep, Heart Gallery; Twan Russell, Former Miami Dolphins player; Derrick Roberts, ChildNet; West Shelton, Heart Gallery; and Robert Smith, former Vikings player.



Local youth enjoying football camp.

Plantation, FL – The XLIII Super Bowl has come and gone but football fever has not left South Florida. Former Miami Dolphins' NFL linebackers Twan Russell and John Offerdahl and former Minnesota Vikings running back Robert Smith shared their time, talent and love of the game with Broward County's foster children. On Saturday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, the Dolphins Training Facility was the scene of smiles, cheers and fun for over 75 of Broward County's foster youth.

The event was organized by the Miami Dolphins, ChildNet and the Heart Gallery of Broward County. Former NFL heavyweights and the Dolphins Cheerleaders spent their morning hosting a Cheerleading Camp and a Football Clinic. Jennifer Smith, ChildNet's Foster Home Recruitment Coordinator and key organizer for the event, considers it to be a success. "Foster children have been through many challenges that would be overwhelming for the average adult, much less children. Today, they can enjoy just being kids," adds Jennifer. Former Viking's running back Robert Smith was excited about the chance to talk to and coach local foster kids. "As a former player, I know first-hand the value of athletics in promoting discipline and teamwork in a child's life", said Robert Smith. "It was a fun experience that exposed them to the sense of belonging that's found in a team environment." Twan Russell, former Dolphins' linebacker and Dolphins' Director of Youth and Community Programs, said the franchise is honored to be able

to host an event where foster children can have fun and be themselves without being concerned with the worries of everyday life. Lunch and refreshments were provided by Publix.

Before and after the event The Heart Gallery of Broward County had professional photographers take photos of children that are available for adoption. The Heart Gallery is a traveling photo exhibit of foster children who are waiting to be permanently adopted. They raise awareness about the need for local foster children to have a second chance at a family by displaying the photo exhibit in many public places throughout the county. The Heart Gallery exhibit is at Nova Southeastern University until mid-March. The event provided children with a dream of going pro and young football fanatics with the opportunity to learn about the game from three former pros who have 23 years of combined NFL experience.

ChildNet is the private, not for profit organization selected by the state through a competitive process to serve as the local Community Based Care lead agency. As the lead agency, ChildNet manages the local system of services and supports for Broward's abused, abandoned and neglected children and their caregivers. This system of care was developed with extensive input from local stakeholders and its effective implementation depends upon their continued support. For more information on ChildNet, visit the Web site at [www.ChildNet.us](http://www.ChildNet.us) or call (954) 414-6000.

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