



REENIE STOGSDILL
LANGSTON HUGHES

As the nation faces an obesity epidemic, physical education teachers have less time and fewer resources to plant healthy seeds in the early lives of their students. In spite of these hurdles, educators strive to recreate physical education classes as lessons that lay the foundation for a life of exercise and healthful living.

“My goal is to teach students skills and concepts, but they need to be healthy and active for a lifetime,” says Reenie Stogsdill, P.E. teacher at Langston Hughes. Stogsdill grew up in Omaha, Nebraska, and ended up in Lawrence after receiving an athletic scholarship to play softball at the University of Kansas, where she competed on two teams that would be inducted into the KU Athletics Hall of Fame. A full-time employee of the Lawrence school district since 1991, Stogsdill also coached softball at Lawrence High School for 16 years.

“The discipline I had to have playing Division I has made me a better teacher and all-around person,” says Stogsdill. “I had the best of both worlds teaching and coaching.”

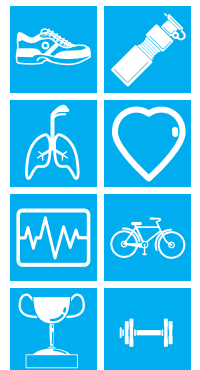
Currently, Stogsdill has her students begin each session with a warm-up and provides a fun fact that may entail anatomy, metabolism, nutrition or anything pertaining to current health and fitness trends. Then they begin a class emphasizing overall fitness, with favorites such as “the mountain trail,” an indoor obstacle course where students traverse “terrain” trying not to fall over into the swamp—moving up, down, over, around and through obstacles.

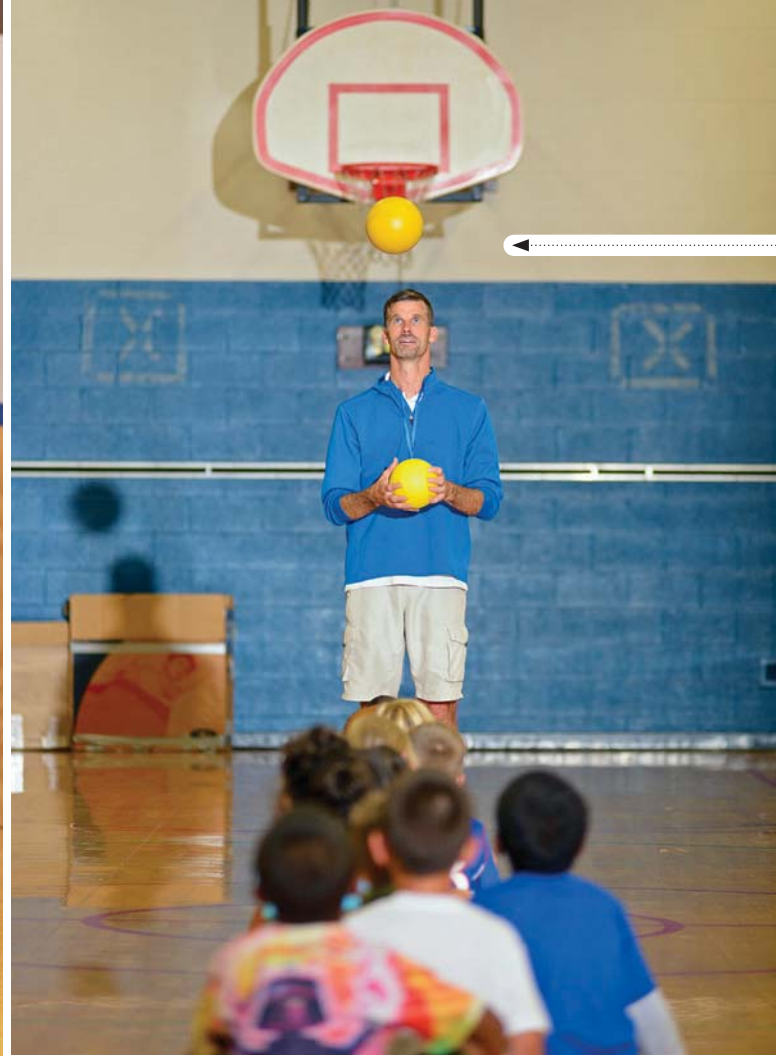
“I want it to be fun,” says Stogsdill. “I want them to be moving. I want them to feel successful. I don’t care if they’re the best athletes. That has nothing to do with it. I think if I can do that, then they’re going to be able to find something that they can do for a lifetime.”

**LM
FIT**

**THE
NEW P.E. SQUAD**

Three local educators represent physical education’s trend in teaching lifelong health





MIKE MARTIN
PRAIRIE PARK

Mike Martin attests that a lot has changed since his school days in Wellsville, Kansas. “When I was in school, unfortunately, P.E. was all about sports-related skills,” says the Lawrence school district’s 2008-09 Teacher of the Year. “If you were a jock, you were great. If you weren’t, then you kind of hid. I try to focus on the whole kid. We do things that are sports-related, but I break it into a skill level more than I break it into a sport. I do a throw-and-catch unit instead of a football unit.”

Teaching in the district since 1996 and at his current post since 1999, Martin has introduced thousands of students to his creations of “Square Tag,” “Fastest Tag in the West” and “Luck of the Roll”—all high-intensity games with no eliminations. Even the coach can’t sit out. “A lot of times I will jump in and do things with the kids,” says Martin. “The kids get really excited. It’s important for them to see an adult being active. That’s a big thing, if we can model for them. They need to know fitness is a lifelong skill. If you ever get away from it, it’s bad for your health.”

**“I TRY TO FOCUS ON THE
WHOLE KID.”**

-MIKE MARTIN

JASON BOTT
DEERFIELD

Jason Bott passes on lessons emphasizing simplicity, sportsmanship, fun and maturity—adjusting them drastically for each grade.

“In kindergarten, I don’t go a lot in-depth with activities,” says Bott. “Basically, it’s about teaching them how to run around without running into somebody.”

A teacher since 2005 and at Deerfield since 2009, Bott played various sports growing up, particularly basketball, but like his counterparts, he does not emphasize level of athleticism—rather the joy movement provides.

“I try not to talk too much,” says Bott. “I want them to get in plenty of activity, and the main thing is to make sure they’re having fun. That’s what I think exercise is supposed to be. It’s supposed to be fun.”

He also teaches young people about sportsmanship, helping them understand that loss is a part of life. “You’re going to learn more from losing than you would from winning,” says Bott. “Each year, I want the kids to grow up a little bit more, mature, be able to work well with others.” **LM**



THE FIRE PLACE

“Your Hometown Fireplace Specialist”

Fireplaces | Stoves | Inserts | Barbecues | Firepits

www.thefire-place.com

(785) 749-2529 | 540 Fireside Ct., Suite B

(Across from Sonic, off 6th Street)

Fireplace Solutions Made Easy