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Former NFL Safety and Super Bowl Champion Antoine Bethea Partners with An Achievable Dream to Mentor Students

The Newport News Native Delivers Lessons From His Book to 6th and 9th Graders at the Nonprofit

Newport News, VA – Antoine Bethea, a 14-year NFL veteran, 3x Pro Bowler, and Super Bowl Champion, has always given back to the community. Through his philanthropy and volunteer efforts, Bethea has invested in his hometown of Newport News, Virginia, in numerous ways. His latest investment? Mentoring the students of An Achievable Dream (AAD) through a workshop series for rising 6th-grade and 9th-grade students.

“It’s particularly meaningful that Antoine has decided to partner with An Achievable Dream to launch his school speaking series,” shares AAD president and CEO, Dr. Lee Vreeland.

“Antoine’s passion for giving back to this community is one that we share. And when we proposed the idea of providing these workshops as a resource to others in the community beyond AAD students, he was excited to support that initiative as well. By pouring into the lives of young students today, Antoine is impacting their futures in ways he may never even realize. We’re so grateful for his time and investment in the next generation.”

The workshops are based around a chapter from Antoine’s book, *Bet On Yourself: Inside the Mind of the Ultimate Underdog*. Specifically, the talks are focused on one of the chapters in the book: *Get Good People in Your Corner*. In these sessions, Antoine spoke with students on the importance of positive relationships and how to build a strong support system while navigating life’s transitions. The events with AAD mark the kickoff of Antoine’s school speaking series, launching in partnership with several regional schools.

In addition to offering these sessions for their students, An Achievable Dream is sponsoring a two-week summer camp, “Men in the Making,” for minority males in the north end of Newport News, focused on offering key components of the AAD program to others in the community, including healthy living, financial literacy, workforce preparedness, and college and career readiness. Antoine will speak to attendees on August 8 about perseverance and the importance of giving back.

“I found Antoine’s words inspiring and motivational,” said Cikiyah B, a 9th-grade student at An Achievable Dream. “We all need people in our corner to give words of encouragement and wisdom through the hard times of life. We also need those supportive people to help us with our decisions in life. I feel we can’t always achieve many things by ourselves – it’s your support system that really strengthens your dreams and goals in life.”

Antoine played collegiate football at Howard University before being drafted by the Indianapolis Colts in 2006. He has been the recipient of the Walter Peyton Man of the Year Award twice and is heralded as one of the greatest NFL Safeties. A seasoned storyteller with a unique ability to connect and inspire, Antoine recently released the deluxe edition of *Bet On Yourself*. From an HBCU to an illustrious NFL career, the book offers an inside look into Bethea's journey, his perspective on tackling life's hurdles, and growing through the coronavirus pandemic.

“Growing up in Newport News, I understand the challenges that our community, and particularly the young minds in our community, face as they navigate their academic careers and their personal lives,” said Antoine Bethea, former NFL superstar. “Throughout my childhood and at the height of my career, I had great advisors who helped me achieve my dreams. It is an honor and privilege to be able to guide and give back to Newport News’ next generation of leaders. I am learning just as much from them as I hope they are learning from my life’s lessons.”

“The transitions to middle school and to high school can be particularly challenging for students,” says Pervis O. Blake, vice president of academics at AAD. “These small-group sessions with a positive role model like Mr. Bethea, who grew up here where our students live in Newport News, are particularly beneficial because it gives them the opportunity to interact with someone they look up to, and ask questions in a safe environment.”

The Bethea Family Foundation has generated over \$550,000 in donations and impacted more than 21,000 kids and families. Antoine has chosen to partner with An Achievable Dream, to create a new forum for dialogue with today's Newport News students. More than a one-and-done experience, his goal is to create genuine relationships, letting kids know they are supported and loved by their community and its leaders.

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About An Achievable Dream

An Achievable Dream, a nonprofit, operates schools in partnership with Newport News Public Schools and Virginia Beach City Public Schools, and AAD Certified Academy in Henrico County near Richmond, Virginia. An Achievable Dream’s mission is to develop independent, productive citizens through a Social, Academic, and Moral Education (SAME®). Dedicated to the belief that all children can learn and succeed regardless of socioeconomic background, AAD provides students with additional resources and opportunities to bring equity to education.