

# Church's sports camp scores with Corsicana children

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**By Laura Frase**

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CORSICANA—Instead of becoming couch potatoes this summer, Northside Baptist Church youth are teaching children the Bible between hoops and high kicks.

Mega Sports Camp offers children from first to sixth grade the opportunity to play a variety of sports and to learn about God at the same time.

This marks the first year the church has offered the camp. Unlike many summer camps, it only meets once a week, Wednesdays from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Northside Baptist created the camp as a replacement summer program for the Awana program, Youth Minister Gary Welch said.

Teenagers in the church's student ministry, ranging from seventh grade through high school, teach the campers. "This is their mission project," Welch said.

The teens were excited about the chance.

“The youth minister talked to us about it, and we all jumped at the opportunity,” said 16-year-old Britney Wigley, head of registration for the camp.

The camp offers football, soccer, basketball, cheerleading and music, led by one head coach and three assistant coaches. Campers register for a sport each week.

Along with sports drills and playing, the coaches lead Bible studies for the children. And at the end of the night, campers and coaches come together for music and a final Bible story.

“I thought this was a good way to use my athletic abilities to teach younger kids and to teach them about God,” said 17-year-old head basketball coach Mark Burns.

At a youth camp in Lufkin, the church’s student ministry tried out the Mega Sports Camp for children in a low-income housing development, Welch said. There were about 50 to 60 children each night, and seven professed faith in Christ during the camp, he said.

“This has been successful, because you’re doing sports,” Wigley said. “You’re more involved with them, so it builds relationships.”

Burns agreed, adding: “The kids are having fun, and the sports give them an incentive to come, and they learn about why they are here. It gives them something to look forward to.”

Mega Sports Camp has proven to be a success at the church, and Welch hopes to involve more children.

“We’re ecstatic with what’s going on here,” he said.

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