

Chippewa Valley launches new student athlete website



Life of an Athlete Director and Founder John Underwood visited the Chippewa Valley Schools district in 2015, bringing information about improving athletic performance to district middle and high school coaches. Chippewa Valley Schools will soon launch a website based on Underwood's principles in the district. Photo courtesy of DR. CHARLENE MCGUNN

By Nicole Tuttle , For The Macomb Daily

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Life of an Athlete Director and Founder John Underwood visited the Chippewa Valley Schools district in 2015, bringing information about improving athletic performance to district middle and high school athletes. Chippewa Valley Schools will soon launch a website based on Underwood's principles in the district. Photo courtesy of DR. CHARLENE MCGUNN

A new website aimed at student athletes was launched in Chippewa Valley Schools Tuesday focused on improving athletic performance and healthy lifestyles.

The website cvsloa.org was the subject of an invitation only event held Tuesday afternoon at the Chippewa Valley Schools Administration Building in Clinton Township where it was rolled out to coaches, parents and athletes. Designed by Foxbright, the website will be based on the Life of an Athlete program used in the district

and will include a mandatory survey for student athletes according to Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Families Executive Director Dr. Charlene McGunn.

“It has a variety of information about nutrition and sleep and all of this then, will be utilized by athletic departments in the school district,” McGunn said.

The survey will test the knowledge of student athletes about the effects of lifestyle choices on athletic performance, including use of alcohol and drugs as well as healthy aspects like sleep, according to McGunn. Students will take the survey before they play a sport during a school year.

“They must take that survey to play. It is a novel approach. The other aspect is standardization of information provided to parents and athletes and coaches,” McGunn said.

Chippewa Valley High School Athletic Director Chad Hottle said the survey will consist of questions focusing on leadership, diet information, sleep and codes of conduct.

Life of an Athlete Chippewa Valley Schools is a result of a collaboration between the Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Families and the athletic departments of the school district.

“It was an effort to really send home to athletes, the most visible group in any school, the idea of the profound effects of youth use in adolescents, on development, and certainly on athletic performance as well as performance in life, academic performance, and so forth,” McGunn said.

Life of an Athlete- Pure Performance- Human Performance Project is based in Lake Placid, N.Y. It was founded by John Underwood, who has trained and advised over two dozen Olympians and worked with professional sports federations such as the NHL, NCAA, NFL, NBA and National Federation of High School Athletics. He is also a human performance consultant for U.S. Navy SEALs, according to information provided by the organization.

Hottle said Underwood’s program not only lists what student athletes should avoid when looking to improve athletic performance, but also focuses on the positive things they can do including nutrition and hydration.

“It’s a great message. Not just the negative. Here are positive things you can do. I think it is beneficial to students. They hear so often, ‘Don’t do drugs, don’t drink,’” Hottle said.

Underwood has brought presentations of the Life of an Athlete program to Chippewa Valley Schools in 2010 and 2015, for student athletes, parents and coaches.

“It is all about the perfection of athletic performance with consideration of certain major areas like diet and sleep, because he has done sleep research. A large component is the effect of alcohol, marijuana and other drugs on athletic performance,” McGunn said.

Underwood’s 2015 visit to the middle and high school athletes and coaches of the Chippewa Valley Schools district prompted a change in the district’s athletic code of conduct, according to McGunn. The code was changed to more closely fit Underwood’s recommendations for consequences for addictive and illegal substance use by athletes, McGunn added.

The website was created to make the Life of an Athlete program and information more visible to students beyond Underwood’s visits, according to McGunn.

“We wanted to move this forward. We wanted to integrate the Life of an Athlete further and to provide resources to people, to standardize information they receive, and it is very difficult with a large program to do that. This makes all of that information available to people,” McGunn said.

McGunn also hopes the new website will serve to provide information and examples to other local school districts, so that they may consider launching their own programs.