



For Immediate Release

Joique Bell, former Detroit Lions player, on a mission to turn the page on illiteracy; Launches effort to bring literacy program to Benton Harbor

DETROIT — June 9, 2022 — Former Benton Harbor High School football standout and Detroit Lions running back Joique Bell is on a mission to tackle the literacy problem in Benton Harbor, Mich. During his 11th annual JBC (Joique Bell Charity) Weekend - June 23 to 26, Bell is launching a \$200,000 fundraising initiative to bring literacy nonprofit Beyond Basics to his alma mater. Learn more about this effort in this launch video – https://youtu.be/Cq-uQEL_7mA.

The fun-filled weekend in Benton Harbor, Mich. includes a golf outing, bowling tournament, and football camp. Tickets are available at <https://www.joiquebell.com/charity-weekend>.

“Illiteracy is a real problem facing Benton Harbor. I’m excited to team up with Beyond Basics to bring intensive intervention to students in my hometown. This academic program has the power to drastically improve the lives of every student who struggles to read,” Bell, former athlete, philanthropist, and entrepreneur, said.

In the Benton Harbor school district, more than 90 percent of students are reading below their grade level. “Benton Harbor students are capable, and they deserve this opportunity to learn to read,” Beyond Basics CEO Pamela Good said. “Intensive reading intervention ensures students can meaningfully access the education being provided and participate in society.”

Beyond Basics currently serves K-12 students in 20 locations in metropolitan Detroit. A diagnostic assessment informs an individualized literacy program delivered by trained staff tutors who work with students one-on-one, an hour a day, five days per week. On average, students achieve two grade levels of movement in reading.

Bell says Beyond Basics has the track record to significantly improve literary statistics in his hometown, where currently 513 out of 540 students at Benton Harbor High School are reading below their grade level.

“I don’t want any student to walk into a library and feel like they don’t belong,” Bell said. “Reading is fundamental. It broadens the imagination and allows students to dream big and reach their goals.”

About Joiqie Bell

A native of Benton Harbor, Mich., Joiqie Bell played in the National Football League from 2010 to 2016. He is a former Division II Player of the Year at Wayne State University. Now retired, he is an entrepreneur and philanthropist dedicated to giving back to the youth of his hometown and Detroit.

About Beyond Basics

Founded in 1999, [Beyond Basics](#) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working to eradicate illiteracy, transforming the lives of students and creating stronger communities. Its one-on-one, phonics-based multisensory tutoring program helps students achieve grade-level movement in reading in an average of six weeks. In addition to structured literacy interventions, enrichment programs cultivate curiosity while building vocabulary and comprehension. These programs encourage a love of lifelong learning with fine arts activities that expand horizons.

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