



# IT BEARS MENTIONING.....

December 2005

## A SEASON OF GIVING

Bears cornerbacks **Jerry Azumah** and **Charles Tillman** joined equipment manager **Tony Medlin** at a press conference at Halas Hall last month to announce the start of the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Chicago Bears/Dominick's Coat Drive. The Coat Drive officially began on Sunday, November 20 with a stadium collection drive at Soldier Field prior to our victory over the Panthers. Much to the surprise and delight of the Bears, the Coat Drive received an early boost on Wednesday, November 16 from "The Tony Danza Show." Jerry Azumah, who appeared as a guest on the show, accepted a donation of 500 coats, mittens, and scarves, courtesy of the Danza Show. Thousands of coats will be collected this year as part of the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Chicago



Bears/Dominick's Coat Drive benefiting the Salvation Army and public schools in the Chicagoland area. Coats can be dropped off at all 99 Dominick's stores throughout Chicagoland from November 20, 2005 through January 17, 2006. To find a Dominick's near you, please log on to [www.Dominicks.com/StoreLocator.asp](http://www.Dominicks.com/StoreLocator.asp) or visit [www.ChicagoBears.com/community](http://www.ChicagoBears.com/community).



Jerry Azumah, Charles Tillman, and Tony Medlin participate in a press conference announcing the start of the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Chicago Bears/Dominick's "Coat Drive."

## BACK TO SCHOOL

Each Tuesday during the football season, Chicago Bears players visit Chicago Public Schools to speak to, motivate, and interact with students as part of the Bears School Outreach program. The theme for player visits is character development, goal setting, and commitment to excellence. Players who have participated in Bears School Outreach so far this year include **Justin Gage**, **Mike Green**, **Rex Grossman**, **Robbie Gould**, **Todd Johnson**, **Ian Scott**, and **Bobby Wade**. More than 7,000 students benefit annually from this program.



Bobby Wade speaks with students at Southside Occupational Academy.



Hunter Hillenmeyer talks to a 7<sup>th</sup> grade class about the importance of the "Hello to Our Heroes" program.

# HELLO TO OUR HEROES

Bears linebacker **Hunter Hillenmeyer** visited Stratford Middle School in Bloomingdale on Tuesday, November 8 to support the "Hello to Our Heroes" program. Hunter helped a 7<sup>th</sup> grade class write letters to men and women of the military who are currently serving overseas. The students sent early holiday greetings to the soldiers and thanked them for their bravery, while wishing them a safe return. As part of this program, which is sponsored by Staples, a Bears player visits a different school once a month during

the football season to help students write letters. The letters are then distributed by the USO to troops serving overseas. Staples provides letter writing kits to the students, as well as to the service men and women who receive the students' letters.



that was easy.

## BEARS CELEBRATE VETERANS' DAY

Defensive tackles **Tommie Harris** and **Tank Johnson** visited the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center in Chicago on Tuesday, November 8 in honor of Veterans' Day. Tommie and Tank participated in a question and answer session before playing a Bears trivia game and signing autographs for approximately 100 veterans who are currently patients at the facility. The Jesse Brown VA Medical Center provides care to over 62,000 veterans who reside in the city of Chicago and Cook County, plus six counties in northwest Indiana.



Tommie Harris and Tank Johnson sign autographs for veterans at Jesse Brown VA Medical Center.



Connie Payton helped collect toys from generous fans at the 2004 Toy Drive benefiting the Walter and Connie Payton Foundation.

## PAYTON TOY DRIVE

The Chicago Bears will assist the Walter and Connie Payton Foundation with their annual Toy Drive by hosting a collection at Soldier Field on December 4 prior to the Bears-Packers game. Volunteers from the Walter and Connie Payton Foundation will be stationed at entrance gates to collect new toys from generous fans. Please bring a new, unwrapped toy to help make the holidays a little brighter for children in the Chicago area! Also, the new book **PAYTON**, written by the Payton family, is available on the Walter and Connie Payton Foundation website, [www.Payton34.com](http://www.Payton34.com). This book provides fans with personal stories and photos from those who viewed Walter Payton as a father, son and friend.

# HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!

Bears cornerback **Nathan Vasher** and wide receiver **Justin Gage** celebrated Thanksgiving early when they visited 10pin Bowling Lounge on Tuesday, November 22 for the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Maryville Academy Thanksgiving Dinner, which was hosted by Harry Caray's Restaurant Group. Nathan and Justin handed out gifts and bowled with hundreds of children and teenagers from Maryville Academy before helping serve a traditional Thanksgiving dinner to the youngsters. Maryville is the largest residential child-care facility in the state of Illinois and serves over 16,000 youth at 21 locations annually.



Justin Gage and Nathan Vasher pose with children from Maryville Academy at 10pin Bowling Lounge.

## TOUCHDOWN CLUB POWER HOUR

Bears long snapper **Patrick Mannelly** and his wife joined Bears and Staples staff members at the Robert Wood Boys & Girls Club in Chicago on Tuesday, November 15 for the "Touchdown Club Power Hour" tutoring program. The Bears partnered with Staples and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago in creating this initiative, which is designed to encourage students to focus on academics after school and reward them for their achievements. The final session of this program for the 2005 season will take place on Tuesday, December 20 from 3:00



that was easy.



Patrick Mannelly helps a student with her homework at the Robert Wood Boys & Girls Club.

p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boys & Girls Club in Chicago.



### HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU

**Qasim Mitchell....December 3, 1979**  
**Mike Green....December 6, 1976**  
**Robbie Gould....December 6, 1982**  
**Tank Johnson....December 7, 1981**  
**Joe Odom....December 14, 1979**  
**Cameron Worrell....December 14, 1979**  
**Todd Johnson....December 18, 1978**  
**Bernard Berrian....December 27, 1980**  
**Cedric Benson....December 28, 1982**

## CONGRATULATIONS!!!

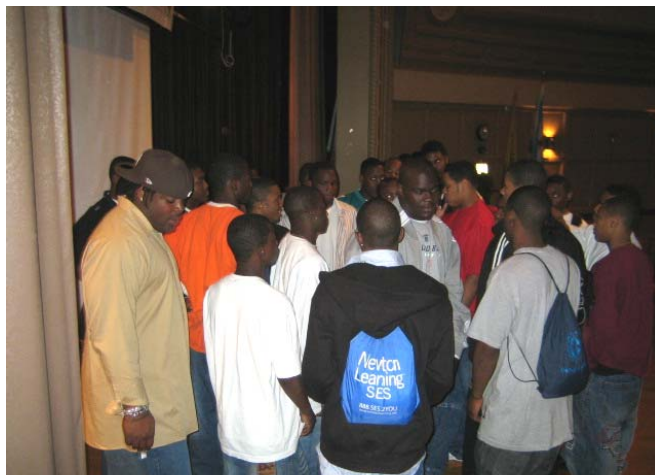
Congratulations to Bobby Wade for being the Chicago Bears 2005 nominee for the NFL Walter Payton "Man of the Year" Award!

This is the only League award that recognizes a player's off-the-field community service as well as his playing excellence. This prestigious NFL award has been in existence since 1970 and honors players who demonstrate outstanding balance in their lives between civic and professional responsibilities.

Bobby was selected for this honor because of his steadfast dedication to the community and his continuous involvement in the Bears School Outreach program. For the second consecutive season, Bobby has made the commitment to dedicate each Tuesday to visiting students at different Chicago Public Schools.

# YOUTH FOR LIFE

Bears defensive tackles **Tommie Harris** and **Tank Johnson** participated in the Youth For Life: *Remembering Walter Payton* (YFL) program at Marshall High School in Chicago on Tuesday, November 15. Sophomores and juniors attended an assembly about organ and tissue donation, which also featured the mother of a slain Marshall student who chose to donate her son's organs along with a woman who was a recipient of one of the student's donated organs. Tommie and Tank also spoke at the assembly, and then stayed afterwards to sign autographs for the students. Wide receiver **Justin Gage** also attended a YFL assembly that day at Amundsen High School on Chicago's north side. YFL, which is sponsored by Walgreens, is a nationwide program whose mission is to educate high school students about organ donation and to encourage them to register as organ donors when they receive their driver's licenses.



Tommie Harris and Tank Johnson speak with students following a Youth For Life assembly at Marshall High School.



2005 Chicago Bears "Coach of the Week" winners

Alberssen of Taylorville, Don Dobrino of Mount Olive, Brian Plotner of Salt Fork, Bruce Kay of Cary-Grove, and Hud Venerable of Normal Community. The Chicago Bears donated \$1,500 to the football programs at each winning coach's school. In addition, each coach was recognized in an on-field ceremony during halftime of the Bears-Panthers game on November 20. All "Coach of the Week" honorees also received a signed, framed certificate and they attended a Bears practice and "chalk talk" at Halas Hall with Bears Head Coach Lovie Smith.

## THANKS COACH!

For nine weeks during the high school football season, the Bears selected one high school football head coach each week as our "Coach of the Week" winner. This program was created to honor high school coaches who develop players' football skills and knowledge, character, leadership, discipline, and teamwork abilities. Other criteria include the coach's contributions to his program, players, and community. The 2005 "Coach of the Week" winners include: Bill Mitz of Stevenson, Rob Zvonar of Lincoln-Way East, Trevor Lehnen of Rantoul, Ron Muhitch of Wheaton-Warrenville South, Scott



## SUPER BOWL SWEEPS

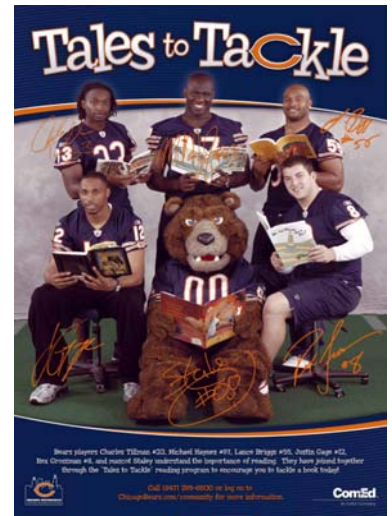
Bears Care, a fund of the McCormick Tribune Foundation, in cooperation with the Rockford Area Habitat for Humanity, announced its 11<sup>th</sup> Annual "Super Bowl Sweeps" to be held on January 19, 2006. The holder of the winning ticket wins the following prize package: **Four tickets to Super Bowl XL on Feb. 5, 2006 at Ford Field in Detroit; Round-trip airfare from Chicago Midway Airport to Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (Travel dates will be Feb. 2 and Feb. 6. Airline tickets donated by Southwest Airlines); Hotel accommodations of two rooms for four nights. You may enter the "Super Bowl Sweeps" by visiting [www.BearsCareSuperBowlSweeps.com](http://www.BearsCareSuperBowlSweeps.com). A donation of \$30.00 to Bears Care is suggested. Good luck!**



BEARS CARE  
A fund of the Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation

# TALES TO TACKLE

The Chicago Bears "Tales to Tackle" reading program officially kicked-off in 30 Chicago area schools on Monday, October 17. For the second consecutive year, the "Tales to Tackle" program is sponsored by ComEd, an Exelon Company, and is a component of the Chicago Bears Education initiative, which is presented by Chase. There are over 7,300 students participating in the program this year, and results from the first month of the program are now available on the Chicago Bears web site. To track the progress of the students who have reached their goal of reading three books per month, please visit [www.ChicagoBears.com/community](http://www.ChicagoBears.com/community). For more information on the "Tales to Tackle" program, please call (847) 739-5308.



## PLAY FOOTBALL!!!

The Chicago Bears hosted two youth football championship events during the month of November in the Walter Payton Center at the Bears training facility in Lake Forest. The NFL Punt, Pass and Kick Team Championship was held on Saturday, November 12. Qualifying finalists then participated in an on-field demonstration prior to the Bears-49ers game on November 13, and the winners were announced during the game on the video boards in Soldier Field. The Bears also hosted the Chicago Park District's "Bears Inner City Flag Football" championship games on



A Punt, Pass and Kick finalist participates in an on-field demonstration prior to the Bears-49ers game.

Saturday, November 19. Children, ages 9-12, who live in public housing have the opportunity to learn and play the game of football through this organized league consisting of 16 teams. For more information on youth football opportunities with the Chicago Bears, please visit [www.ChicagoBears.com/community](http://www.ChicagoBears.com/community).



Adrian Peterson read a book to three first grade classes at Lincoln Elementary School in Evanston on Tuesday, November 29.



Michael Haynes visited Youthbuild Lake County on Tuesday, November 1 to speak to a class about job and life skills.

**CONTACT THE CHICAGO BEARS COMMUNITY RELATIONS DEPARTMENT AT (847) 295-6600**