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## EDUCATION EMPLOYEE RECOGNIZED AS 'EVERYDAY HERO'

Harris Ambush, community liaison and instructor in the USF St. Petersburg College of Education, was recently recognized as an "Everyday Hero" by Bay News 9 for his work with local schools. He was honored during a ceremony with other Everyday Heroes at the Renaissance Tampa International Plaza Hotel.

Ambush is an education doctoral student who helped create and coordinates after-school club programs for six elementary schools in south St. Petersburg. Every Friday, the clubs from four of the schools meet to compete in a game of soccer to help the students learn about team-building, respect, positive attitudes, and to build self-esteem and self-awareness.

"This program offers these students support in so many ways, as it is designed to offer a holistic approach for a deeper sense of interpersonal and intrapersonal development," said Ambush. "The program also promotes mindfulness with a number of activities throughout the week, including yoga and other meditative techniques.

"While the recognition from Bay News 9 and the community is an honor, the greatest privilege is being able to see the students' growth and enjoyment," said Ambush. "The recognition comes from the smiles of the kids and families, knowing you are doing right in your community and right in your heart."

The after-school program is one of several ways in which the College of Education and its students are involved with local schools throughout the year. Some of the other activities include a SMART (Science, Math, Art, Reading and Technology) Leadership Summer Camp, a leadership club, mentoring, tutoring, and field trips to USFSP and surrounding organizations.

"USFSP education students are involved in every component of these programs through their coursework and service as summer camp counselors, mentors, tutors, field trip guides, leadership assistants, and soccer referees," said Olivia Hodges, interim dean of the College of Education. Hodges added that these experiences sometimes serve as the only opportunity for these youths to visit and experience a college



*Harris Ambush, center, with Erica Riggins, right, and Bill Murphy, left. Photo credit: Harris Ambush.*

campus. “These interactions with our education students and visits to the campus help USFSP to develop positive relationships with the kids.”

Learn more about the after-school program in this [Bay News 9 video segment](#).

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