

Wade Smith holds “Reading with the Pros” childhood literacy program

Aaron Wilson

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Retired former Texans Pro Bowl offensive guard Wade Smith took his “Reading with the Pros’ childhood literacy program on the road Friday.

Smith, former Texans offensive tackle Eric Winston, former Carolina Panthers cornerback Dante Wesley, former Arizona Cardinals tight end John Bronson and former Dallas Cowboys defensive end Courtney Brown held a classroom reading session at Redding Elementary School in San Francisco..

Smith is hoping to expand his reading program around the NFL. His charitable foundation provides support for youth and community programs through childhood literacy and educational initiatives along with an annual scholarship program.

“The vision of it is big, and the ultimate goal is to get all 32 NFL teams involved,” Smith said. “We want to make that happen. The kids have really loved it. The idea is to get kids to realize that picking up a book and reading it is so fun and open up their creativity in their minds.

“Redding Elementary is a perfect fit for us. It’s a diverse school and has the right demographic makeup. It’s a small school with a tight-knit family atmosphere.”

Smith conducted a Q&A and panel discussion with the students.

“We talk about everything from your biggest inspiration and favorite football team to how to deal with someone who picks on you,” Smith said. “We love to read and we think it’s cool to read. If you’re struggling with reading or have learning disabilities or dyslexia, you shouldn’t keep it to yourself and it’s cool to ask questions and get people to help you.”

Smith’s ultimate goal is to connect with NFL community relations directors and NFL Players Association officials to spread the word about his reading program.

“We’re trying to get current NFL players to do it out of the kindness of their hearts,” Smith said. “We’re trying to build it to the point where we implement it with all 32 NFL franchises.”

A Dallas native, Smith has held several charitable events in Houston.

Smith is in the process of writing a children’s book that will be published April 22, his birthday weekend when he’ll hold a free football and cheerleading camp. All roceeds of book sales will go toward his charitable foundation.

The book is called ‘Smitty hits the playbooks’

“I can’t wait to read my own book to kids,” Smith said. “I love reading so much that I decided to write the book. Reading and writing opens kids up to a lot more possibilities. It’s something I’m very passionate about.”

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Aaron Wilson covers the Texans for The Houston Chronicle.

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