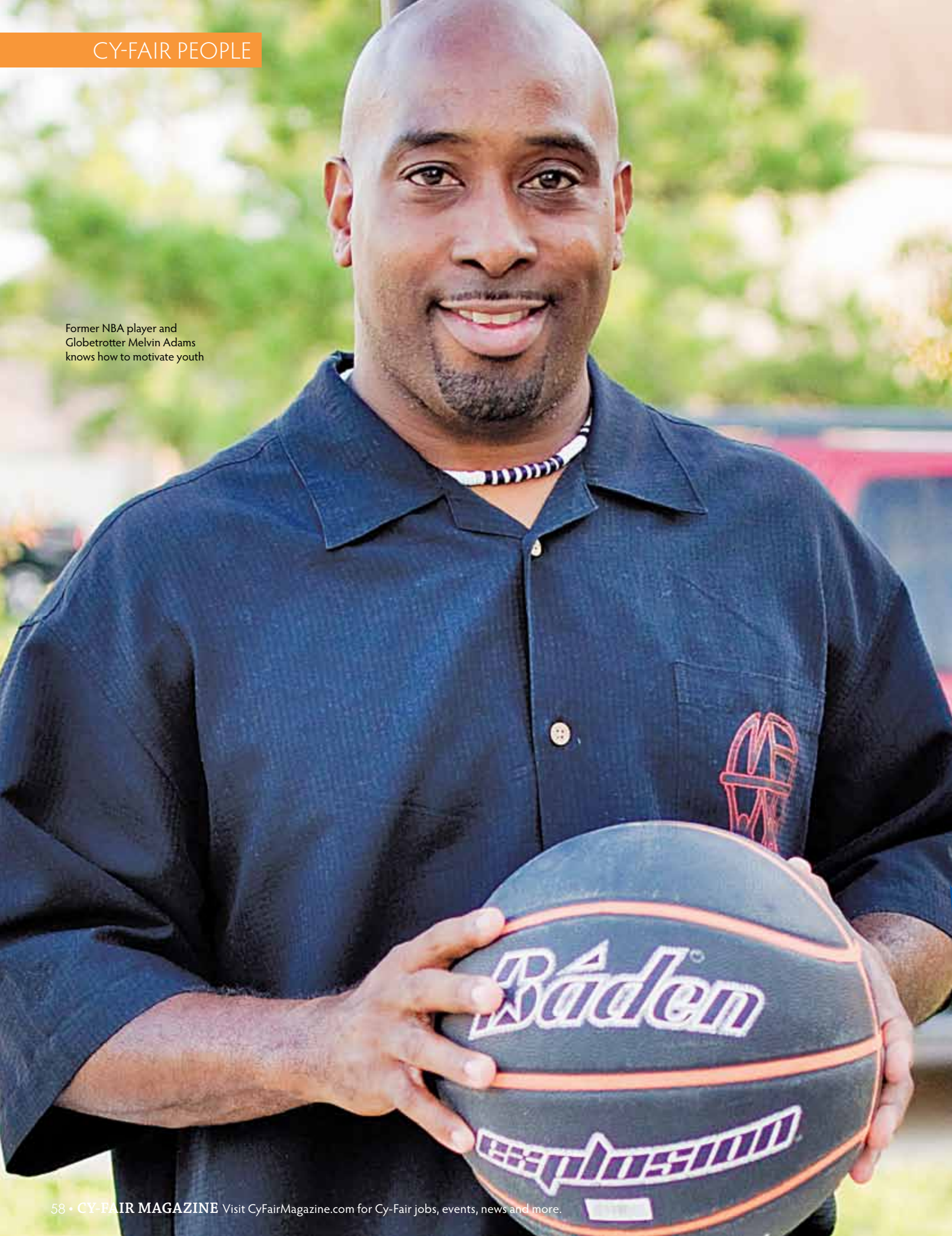


Former NBA player and
Globetrotter Melvin Adams
knows how to motivate youth





MELVIN ADAMS

Former Globetrotter inspires Cy-Fair youth through basketball, comedy, and words of encouragement

Written by Gail Collins

Photography by Marisa Hugonnett

Local resident Melvin Adams wants good things for kids and inspires them to want the same for themselves. The NBA player turned Globetrotter showman inspires youth by combining sleight of the hand, basketball, comedy, and motivational messages. Adams explains to students how hard work, responsible choices, and staying the course will help them realize their dreams. “God uses ordinary

people to do extraordinary things,” Adams tells a youth group at New Experience Fellowship Church. “Not only was I short; I was poor, my mother was abusive, and my father wasn’t around.” His is a rough start, but he laces it with humor. “If you’re black, you’re from the hood; if you’re Hispanic, you’re from the barrio; if you’re white, you’re from the suburbs.” Laughter bubbles up, and Adams says, “I’m from

duh hood.” Dressed in baggy jeans and a T-shirt, he looks like them. Born in the projects of Houston in 1971, Adams understands their temptations. And he challenges them to make it, too. “Your choices today will determine where you’ll be tomorrow. Drugs and alcohol will hold you back from your dreams, your vision and your purpose.”

Melvin and Sonia Adams with their sons Silas and Seth



“Rise up and realize your potential – be the men you were called to be.”
- Melvin Adams

Tragic Beginnings

Adams’ father died when he was 13, and he turned to sports for therapy. Despite his dogged dedication to grades and goals, his mother saw only the gaps in his performance. So, he tried harder. “All I ever wanted was my mother to tell me she loved me.” Teens understand that. Perseverance paid off for Adams with a college scholarship. He played basketball and met a coach who mentored not only his game, but his spirit. One evening, he sat at their family dinner table while the children chatted about their day and passed the food. Adams had never shared a meal like that, and it left a lasting impression. The coach noticed Adams’ gift of talking to people and dared him to write his testimony, but cross God out of it. Like Adams steers youth today, this man pressed him not to preach, but to use his ability to connect with people in their struggles with their moral compasses. That coach’s insight would both confront Adams in his career and guide him through it.

Opener for Jerry Seinfeld

Adams began ‘talking about his walk’ at a comedy club competition while still in college. “My friends encouraged me to try for the \$500 prize. I won that, and then, \$1000, \$1500, and finally, \$2000. Then, I competed with the best of the winners to open for Jerry Seinfeld, and I won that, too.” He had a busy basketball season to play, so he missed that opportunity, but he understood he was reaching folks.

World-Renowned Harlem Globetrotters

The San Antonio Spurs recruited Adams, and within a year, an offer came to play all over the world with the Harlem Globetrotters. A fond memory nudged his choice. At 10 years old, Adams met Globetrotter “Curly” Neal at a game and was impressed with his kindness. “He let me shake his hand and rub his head.” When Adams’ turn came, he shaved his head, too. For three years, he traveled for 11 months out of the year, but in quiet moments, he’d reflect, “Always let me remember where I came from – poverty.” Maybe, that’s why he noticed the little girl in the crowd who stirred

Melvin Adams Fun Facts



Adams is only 5’8”, but big on gumption!



As a kid, Adams made 3000 jump shots and ran 3 miles a day to get good.



At Eisenhower High School, Adams led the district in assists and steals, averaging 16 points per game for the Eagles.



As a Globetrotter, Adams won Mr. Globetrotter, an award exemplifying excitement and energy, multiple times.



Silas playing basketball



Seth spinning the basketball

his past. "I made people laugh, but some of them were going home to crap. It bothered me for the next two years." Then, he met Sonia and had to decide between his mission and marriage or basketball.

Everyday Heroes

In his soul, Adams heard this advice, "Stay humble, and the second half of your life will be better than the first." Now, with two sons of his own, he tells kids at school assemblies and his basketball camps nationwide, "Make like an elephant with a small mouth and big ears: Listen." To teen girls, he says, "Don't settle for nothin' less than the best," and to the guys, "Rise up and realize your potential - be the men you were called to be." Though he's devoted to youth, Adams thumps his chest and says, "My heart is for men. If you don't know

"Your choices today will determine where you'll be tomorrow."

- Melvin Adams

how to love your wife, you're a joke. We are the umbrella for our family." As he passes a father in the parking lot with a baby on his shoulder and a dirty diaper in his hand, Adams says, "You're my hero." - CFM

At age 10, freelance writer Gail Collins saw a Harlem Globetrotter game and always wanted to meet a player.



At San Jose Christian College, Adams was a two-time NCAA III All-American basketball player, leading Warrior history in all-time scoring, assists and steals.



Adams is still the fastest dribbler on the planet, according to the Guinness Book of World Records.

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