

Sound Beginnings Hosts 10th Annual Aggie Football Game | CEHS

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On a sunny September afternoon, student athletes from the Utah State University football team gathered on a grassy field and prepared to face some of their least likely opponents: a group of energetic children.

The 10th annual Sound Beginnings football game was a perfect fall kick-off for families who participate in the program. Sound Beginnings provides home- and center-based services to families of infants, preschoolers, and kindergartners with hearing loss. The football game is one of the longest-standing traditions of the program.

Amber Skinner and her sons have been involved with the Sound Beginnings program for nearly eight years, and the football game is always a highlight of their back to school season. “[The athletes] look like all-stars, and so every single one of my boys was ecstatic about this activity,” she said. “My favorite part is when the big guys play a game with the little guys. How they interact with them is really fun.”

“It’s just fun to see how happy it makes them,” said Dustin Mathews, USU student athlete. “It’s rewarding for us too. I’m grateful to be here and feel lucky to have opportunities to help in the community like this.”

Nicole Martin, director of Sound Beginnings, says the unity and support brought by events such as these can make a huge difference for parents as well as the kids. “Football is an amazing analogy for the challenges these parents face,” Martin said. “They have to roll up their sleeves and do hard things for their families every day, and to feel that rush of synergy and drive from these student athletes helps them know that they can make

it. It’s amazing to see parents walk out so buoyant after walking in under stress.”

After some great passes, several races, and many dog piles, the families and student athletes gathered together for a picture and to perform the iconic Aggie chant, “I Believe that We Will Win!” Despite their individual circumstances, families left the game with a sense of partnership, connection, and a renewed commitment to overcome.

For parents, kids, and students alike, the Sound Beginnings scrimmage continues to be one of the most important games of the season.