



Success Story: Tyree Orr, Future Olympian!

By Derrick Buckingham, Chief Development Officer

A few weeks ago, Derrick sat down with Tyree Orr, a former JPA client who credits much of his current success to his strong relationship as a child with Rochelle Jackson of JPA.

It was a cool, cloudy morning at the The Original Pancake House in the Beverly section of the city. I was seated at a table and ordered coffee, anticipating meeting one of the kids often mentioned at JPA as one of its many success stories. I wondered to myself, “Does a future Olympian drink coffee? What does he eat? What does he drink? Is he everything they’re portrayed to be in all those documentaries I’ve watched?”

Then, Tyree walked into the restaurant. Although we hadn’t met, I knew him when I saw him. I think he knew who I was as well. Quickly, all the questions swirling in my mind were answered. Tyree is, as they say, “the truth.”

I was initially struck by Tyree’s physical appearance. He’s all lean muscle, no bulk. He’s slim and built for speed. Nothing unneeded or unnecessary. Clearly Tyree has trained effectively. His conversation with me was much the same: focused and goal-oriented. We sat and talked for almost two hours. Time flew by so quickly.

I was prepared to interview Tyree; to ask him a bunch of question about his life. However, I found myself sitting in rapt attention as he told me about

his goals and aspirations. Tyree currently lives in Las Vegas where he trains. His coach and teammates also live there. Tyree’s specialties are the 200m and the 400m. Over the last few months, Tyree has learned that for him to perform at peak in these events; having lots of muscle mass is not the answer.

Now, his training sessions are more focused and less frequent. Getting the proper amount of rest is very important. He has lost bulk, but dramatically increased his speed. Tyree told me he is running faster times now than ever. He is quickly closing in on the magic time in the 200m when sponsorships begin to materialize, 20.6 seconds.

Speaking of time, it was time for us to order. Tyree ordered an omelet with some cheese and a little sausage in it. He drank water. I thought this may be the only time I get to eat with an Olympian, so I ordered the same. The waitress looked at me as if to say, “Now, you know this is not what you usually order....” Oh well. This was inspiration to change my ways.

Tyree was so excited to tell me about his life’s goals that he barely ate. Here was a young man sitting across the table from me, the picture of health, strength, self-regulation, resiliency and agency...All the qualities that JPA therapists work hard to cultivate in our kids.

Tyree’s upbringing was similar to the lives of the kids we serve. His success to date is a result of overcoming many daunting obstacles. As a child, Tyree’s life was extremely difficult at times. Success in school was a challenge. But through it all, he never lost hope. At a very young age, there was always an inner drive, a voice within whispering to him, “I want to be...you can do it... you can be what you want to be.”

There was also a very important voice outside of him encouraging him along the way. This voice belonged to Rochelle Jackson of JPA. Tyree was effusive in describing the role Rochelle played in his life. The relationship Rochelle developed with him and his mom was critical.

Tyree's journey in becoming a world-class athlete has not been easy. He's endured lots of discouragement. There were times he had no money. He was faced with making critical decisions regarding his training methods and selecting his coaches, decisions that could have severely hampered his career. It was interesting to discover that his effort to make the Olympic team is entirely self-funded.

I have no doubt that Tyree will make it, though. His ambition, drive, resiliency and dedication to his craft will get him there. He is a living, breathing example of what happens when strong relationships are built and maintained with the kids we serve. Your continued support helps our

children realize their dreams can come true.

JPA is very proud of Tyree and all he's accomplished. It was a highlight of my professional career to spend time with this future Olympian. He is every bit the winner I thought he would be. Go Tyree go!!!

JPA



Tyree Orr on the track.