



## Basketball Programs

**"Mighty Mike" Simmel**  
 Founder  
 Camp Director, Speaker, Performer, Advocate



*"Considered by Many, The Most Successful Special Needs Basketball Program In the Country"*

### *"Limits Will Not Define Me My Will Defines My Limits"*

Bounce Out the Stigma® is a 501©3 New Jersey corporation founded in 2005 by former professional basketball player Mike Simmel and his father, Bill. A "grassroots" organization it has become a nationally recognized and acclaimed youth basketball program with a central mission to inspire, educate and empower young people with special needs. The community it looks to serve is children and young adults who suffer from neurological disorders, such as Autism, Epilepsy, ADD, ADHD, Aspergers, Downs Syndrome.

#### *Meeting the Needs of Special Needs and Challenged Youth to Enjoy Basketball*

The Bounce Out the Stigma Project through its numerous basketball and speaking events creates opportunities for those dealing with these disorders. At the same time, tolerance and awareness becomes a unique message for all others. The Program promotes healthy living and empowers its participants to shed labels that far too often are attached to them via the perception of others. "Your Will Defines Your Limits" is stressed at all events.



At Bounce Out the Stigma, no child is ever made to feel different. With its specialized and unique basketball curriculum, every event is constructed to give those with developmental issues a chance to "simply be a kid without a label". They play among their peers for enjoyment. A day or week of basketball fun is the agenda to build motor skill development, self-confidence, and fulfillment with child and parents.

The Program creates opportunities for children and young adults with special needs, while also raising awareness about stigmas, bullying, and acceptance to all people and ages. The Project's goal is to see every man; woman and child with a special need lead a successful and empowered life with a strong sense of self-worth.

*Stigma is NOT a Physical Limitation, Nor an Illness. It is a 'LABEL' Applied BY OTHERS, Based on THEIR Perception, It Says "YOU Can't." This Program Teaches Take the Shot Because You Can!*

### *Camps, Clinics, and Events in Over 24 States*



## About "Mighty Mike" Simmel, Founder

*Mike Simmel knows first hand that sometimes life is not easy. Being in special education gym class in grammar school (he couldn't hop & skip) provided him an incentive to never quit. All that changed when his father gave him a basketball.*

Mike Simmel was diagnosed with epilepsy at the the age of two. Emotional and physical hardships were a daily occurrence in his life. Until the age of 7 when his father gave him a basketball to work on his coordination and motor skills. That basketball became his ticket to peer acceptance and self-confidence until the age of 16 when he experienced a gran-mal epileptic seizure at a elite basketball camp. Camp administrators, fearful of liability issues and seeing his seizure, wanted to remove him from the camp. Undeterred, Simmel and his family dug in their heels and he was able to remain at the camp. However, that incident - and the feelings of isolation that came with it - would change Mike forever. Going forward, he vowed that one day, he was going to give back to other young people who lived lives feeling isolated, peer pressure and bullying, just as he did that day.

A 3-year starter and team captain at powerhouse Don Bosco Prep, Ramsey NJ , to a 3-year starter and team captain at SUNY Purchase College Simmel followed his dream even to playing professional basketball.

In 2005, remember his childhood experiences Bounce Out the Stigma was founded.

A 13-year Veteran with the World Famous Harlem Wizards Today Mike Simmel's focus and mission t is working with youth, young adults, schools, and organizations.

Through his foundation, he seeks to empower youth and remove stigmas and labels associated with childhood neurological issues.

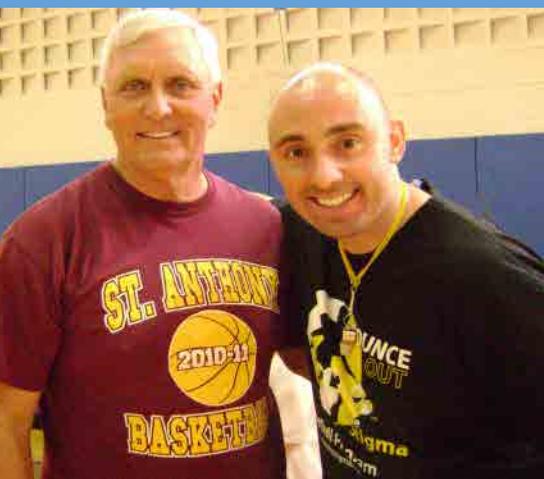
Going to a school, speaking with groups, running clinics and camps, Mike is devoted full time to one goal, leaving his mark on what a kid can accomplish.

## Recent Awards and Accolades

- 2018 Awarded by the New York Knicks the at halftime, The Sweet Water Clifton Award
- 2018 Awarded by the Philadelphia 76ers at halftime, The Game Changer Award.
- 2018 Citation from the City of Philadelphia Citing Bounce Out the Stigma's Partnership with the NBA 76ers
- 2017 Bergen County and State of New Jersey Salute to Champions Special Commendation
- 2016 US Jr. Chamber of Commerces Names Bounce Out the Stigma's Special Needs Camp the Best Skill Development Program in US
- 2014 Governor of Kentucky Appoints Mike Simmel a Kentucky Colonel, the Highest Honor Bestowed in the State
- 2013 Mike Simmel Honored by Children's Hospital of Montefiore
- 2009 Mike Simmel Honored and Named Ten Outstanding Young Americans Award -by the US Junior Chamber of Commerce
- 2009 Mike Simmel Awarded and Named the 2009 Connecticut Outstanding Young American
- 2009 State of New Jersey & Governor Jon Corzine Awards The Alvin Sloatsky Lifestyle Award
- 2007 Presented the Maxwell J. Schleifer Award by Exceptional Parent Magazine & the New York Yankees, in Yankee Stadium



Finding a Stage for Advocacy  
Providing a Platform for Those to  
Young to be Heard



**Bob Hurley, Sr.**  
Hall of Fame Basketball Coach

*"Even (at a young age) Simmel's love of the game and determination to carve out a place in basketball was evident. (Bounce Out the Stigma camps) are utterly life changing. I figured out that there's nothing different about these kids. They love basketball in their own way. We teach them and have fun with it. Mike has taught me*



**John Starks**  
NBA All-Star Guard and NY Knicks Legend

*"It takes a special individual to be able to give up their time and give back to children. You watch these kids come out and hug him ... it's amazing. Amazing...I'm proud of Mike and the road he's traveled to get to this point."*



**Brett Brown**  
Head Coach of the NBA Philadelphia 76ers

*"Mike Simmel and his Program do an outstanding job. I and the 76ers family all appreciate his tireless efforts in making the world a better place. Having worked with Mike these past 2 years I have learned an entirely new side of the game of basketball and kids. Keep up your great work."*

