

# *Windsor Express*

If there is one quality the Windsor Express can teach young people, it's perseverance.

The team was founded in 2012 and joined the 1 year old NBL of Canada, a professional basketball league with, at the time, 8 teams. Windsor became and still is, the league's far western outpost.

In their 7 years, teams have come and gone but the Express has persisted, resolved to provide quality athletic entertainment to this region. And they have done that, winning league titles in back to back seasons, 2014 and 2015 and consistently endeavoring to put a good team on the floor for each and every game.

The Express also committed to being a player in the community, another pledge they have steadfastly maintained.

And that is what has led the Express – their players and coaches – into our schools for basketball camps, skills clinics and just casual visits. One particular instance stands out for us. The team spent a morning with students in the STEPS classroom at Riverside Secondary School. They taught and demonstrated basic skills and then played some games. The session culminated in high 5s and hugs from the students, some who don't like being touched and who often have difficulty socially interacting with strangers.

In just a short time, the Express went from being outsiders to friends.

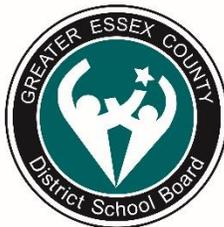
There have been calls to the Board office in the morning from the ever-exuberant team president Dartis Willis, "Hey, we have a free afternoon, is there a school we can go to, to run a clinic?" A few hours later the team is there, wherever it is, enthusiastically working with kids.

This winter, the Express hosted our Board for a night so we could pay tribute to our volunteer coaches.

Life hasn't been easy for the Express though. They're worked diligently to attract an audience. They have suffered economic setbacks but rebounded with relentless optimism.

Players change regularly, so it's tough to have the kind of consistent star quality you need to build and hold a following in pro sports. Still the Express keeps going and coming to schools and being a positive influence for young people.

Unfortunately, they missed the playoffs this year, but we think they will always be a Champion for Education.



*Greater Essex County District School Board  
Champions for Education Awards, April 16, 2019*