



PHIT AMERICA

# Amping Up Tennis & Fitness

For sports industry veteran Jim Baugh, getting kids healthy has been a lifelong passion, and PHIT America is helping make it happen.

BY CINDY CANTRELL

► As he approaches the half-century mark in the tennis business, Jim Baugh has earned the right to reflect and appreciate his numerous contributions that have helped revolutionize the industry. But instead, he determinedly deflects attention and praise from the awards adorning his office.

“It’s plain and simple,” says Baugh, an inductee of the Sports Industry Hall of Fame and Tennis Industry Hall of Fame, and who was named *The Sporting Life’s* Most Powerful Person in Tennis in the Last 25 Years in 1996, and *RSI’s* Person of the Year in 2003. “None of it means squat unless I make a difference in this world.”

Make no mistake, Baugh has already left an indelible mark through his past tenures as president of Wilson Sporting Goods and the Tennis Industry Association, vice president of sales and marketing at Prince

Sports and a board member of the USTA and Sports & Fitness Industry Association.

Baugh’s current passion is “getting kids healthier and smarter” through PHIT America, a nonprofit organization he founded in 2013 to help spotlight PHIT Act legislation pending in Congress, which will allow Americans to use pre-tax medical accounts to pay for physical activity expenses, such as tennis and fitness clubs, programs and equipment.

By 2030, he aims to reach the 50 million schoolchildren—or 93 percent of students nationwide—who do not meet healthy standards set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of participating in physical activity at least three days a week.

“This inactivity pandemic will not turn around unless we turn it around,” says Baugh, noting he is

“further driven” by data such as the UNICEF 2020 Report Card ranking U.S. children last in physical health among 38 countries and 32nd in skills and mental wellbeing.

“Our kids are in trouble because people don’t give the proper respect for what physical activity does for the body, mind and spirit,” he adds. “We have to get more Americans active and playing sports. And it starts with P.E. for schoolchildren.”

## Promoting Health & Fitness

In a way, Baugh’s involvement with PHIT America is a return to his roots. While in graduate school in the 1970s, he established a new physical education program that he then taught to students in grades 1 to 8 for two years. Since that time, Baugh founded Cardio Tennis and PE4Life, as well as co-authored and helped pass the 2000

An estimated 75,000 kids participate in AMPED, a before-school running and walking fitness program that may be paired with an after-school sport.



PEP (Physical Education for Progress) Act appropriating \$900 million toward high school physical education programs.

In a continuation of that theme, PHIT America ([phitamerica.org](http://phitamerica.org)) offers fun beginner programs for lifetime sports in order to improve children's physical and mental health for lifelong happiness. To date, the organization has introduced more than 600,000 kids to physical activity at over 1,000 schools.

Of those, an estimated 75,000 kids in more than 120 elementary schools participate in AMPED, a before-

school, incentivized running and walking fitness program that may be paired with an after-school sport component using specially designed equipment for beginners.

While AMPED+ Tennis will be launched with USTA support, AMPED+ Golf will be offered through the Payne Stewart Kids Golf Foundation. PHIT America is also looking to work closely with SPEEDO so kids learn swim safety and basic skills in AMPED+ Swimming, and AMPED+ Play Fit is being developed using games with a focus on fitness.

“AMPED overcomes two of the biggest issues kids face through inactivity: health issues and learning limitations,” Baugh says, noting that sedentary kids have been shown to receive less blood flow to the brain. “AMPED is low-cost and proven to get kids moving and having fun.”

#### Commitments for Programs

In September 2019, PHIT America received a multi-million-dollar commitment from the Seattle-based Julia Love Pritt Private Foundation, which accelerates PHIT's fundraising

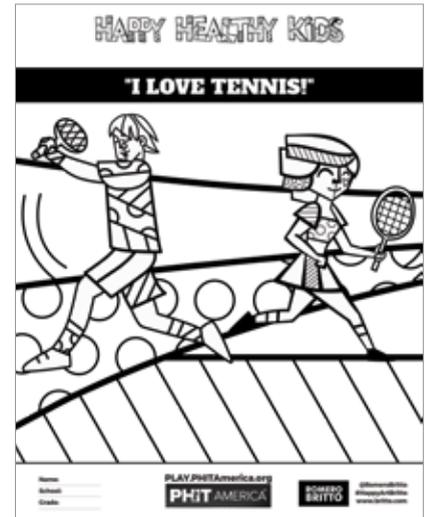
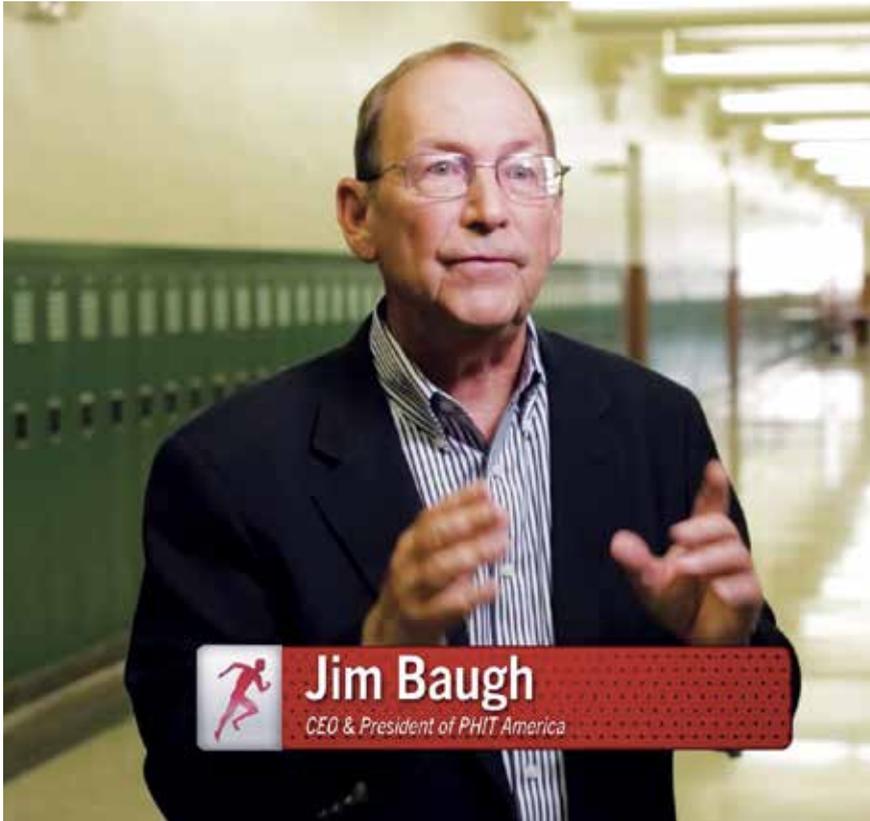
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*When you consider the huge benefits that exercise at school has on academic, physical and emotional health—but that P.E. is currently offered in just 48 percent of American schools—you realize that we are failing.*



HEALTH &  
FITNESS

The \$10,000 Britto Coloring Contest includes Britto-designed templates for different sports, including tennis (below), that kids can color for prizes.



timetable to help establish more fitness programs in American schools.

To raise awareness of its nationwide commitment and mission, PHIT America has also teamed with more than 1,000 local Ambassadors and Fan Club members, presenting sponsor Julia Love Pritt Private Foundation and dozens of partners, including Wilson, Life Fitness and Athletic DNA.

Most recently, PHIT America and internationally renowned artist Romero Britto launched the Let's Get Kids to Play Campaign For Happy Healthy Kids featuring the \$10,000

Britto Coloring Contest. Children may download any of 10 coloring pages, including a tennis coloring page, at <https://phitamerica.org/key-programs/play/10-000-romero-britto-coloring-contest> or create their own entry to be submitted through April 15. Individual prizes will be awarded, as well as a grand prize for the winning student's school.

"Ever since I learned about PHIT America, I saw the need to dedicate myself to getting kids healthier and happier through increased physical activity," Britto says. "Kids are way

too sedentary and unhealthy, so we are promoting the Let's Get Kids to Play Campaign For Happy Healthy Kids artwork through my network. The coloring contest will engage kids while we promote the importance of physical activity and sports for improved health. I hope everyone can get involved with this important mission and support PHIT America."

Baugh said he is proud that PHIT America is playing a role in getting more schoolchildren physically active and playing sports during the school day.

"When you stop and consider the huge benefits that exercise at school has on academic, physical and emotional health—but that P.E. is currently offered in just 48 percent of American schools—you realize that we are failing," Baugh says.

"I believe that all my experiences in the industry have led me to this moment in time to change children's lives through PHIT America. I'm excited and committed to getting it done." ■

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## PHITAMERICA.ORG: FIND OUT WHAT YOU CAN DO

### 1 / JOIN THE MOVEMENT AT PHITAMERICA.ORG.

Go to the “About” tab to find out how to become a sponsor, Ambassador, Fan Club member and more.

### 2 / PHIT AMERICA PROGRAMS.

Check out the “Key Programs” tab on the website for more about PHIT America’s core AMPED program for schoolchildren, including how tennis and other sports can fit into it. The AMPED+Tennis program includes six sessions per child, uses equipment designed for beginners and is implemented by trained staff.

### 3 / JOIN THE PLAY CAMPAIGN.

The PLAY Campaign tab includes how to get involved in the Romero Britto social media campaign “Let’s Get Kids to Play,” and also links to the \$10,000 Britto Coloring Contest, where you can download a Britto-inspired template, including one for tennis.

### 4 / CHECK OUT DATA ON THE INACTIVITY PANDEMIC.

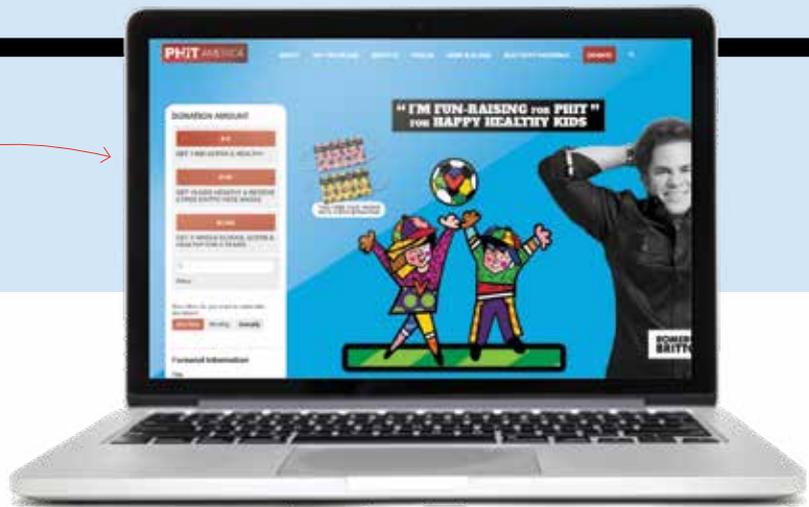
Visit IP.PHITAmerica.org for key trends, facts and research on the dangers facing our kids today.

### 5 / DONATE AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN KIDS’ LIVES.

All amounts are welcome, but a \$100 donation, which gets 10 kids healthy, includes two free Britto-designed face masks, and a \$4,400 donation will get a whole school active and healthy for three years. PHIT welcomes private and corporate donations.

### 6 / SIGN THE PETITION.

Under the “Key Programs” tab, sign the Petition for Healthy Kids and support providing kids with at least 30 minutes of physical activity at least three days a week in school.



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