

Publication: The Virginian-Pilot; Date: May 26, 2013; Section: Hampton Roads; Page: B1

# NFL STAR THROWS A COOKOUT, AND IT'S A COMPLETE SUCCESS

By Scott Daugherty

## The Virginian-Pilot

NORFOLK Hamburgers. Moon bounces. Professional football players. What more could a 5-yearold boy want?

"I wish the Green Ninja was here," Isaiah Clark said with a mouth full of hot dog. "It's a Lego."

Kam Chancellor – a Seattle Seahawks safety who grew up in Norfolk – hosted a free cookout Saturday afternoon which drew hundreds of kids to Lakewood Park.

"When I had cookouts as a kid, I just remember the whole family coming together," said Chancellor, explaining why he has organized the Seven Cities Family & Friends Memorial Day Cookout the past three years. "I thought that if I did that for the community, I could make the entire community come together."

And, he said, making little kids happy isn't a bad way to spend a Saturday.

"I'm all about bettering lives and putting smiles on faces," said Chancellor, who graduated in 2006 from Maury High School and went on to play football at Virginia Tech.

Chancellor has plenty to smile about himself.

Last month, he signed a five-year deal in a contract extension from the Seahawks worth up to \$35 million, he said.

But with great power comes great responsibility. Chancellor said he tries to be a role model, particularly to children in single-parent homes.

"That's something I can relate to," he said, explaining that his mother raised him and his five siblings by herself. He said it was hard, because she had to work so much.

"Six kids in the house with just my mom," he said. "It wasn't easy."

Hence the cookout. For six hours Saturday – while men and women wearing "Property of Seattle" T-shirts served grilled chicken, pork chops and macaroni and cheese – Chancellor signed autographs, posed for photos and chatted with fans .

"I want to be like him. I've wanted to go to the NFL since I was like 2," said 11-yearold Dwight Hawkins.

In addition to Chancellor, a half-dozen other NFL and NBA players attended, including Seahawks cornerback Richard Sherman, Seahawks safety Earl Thomas, Indianapolis Colts safety Antoine Bethea, Arizona Cardinals running back Ryan Williams, Baltimore Ravens backup quarterback Tyrod Taylor and Atlanta Hawks forward Mike Scott.

When Chancellor meets kids, he tries to offer some life lessons, he said.

"Just stay positive," he said. "Anything you want to do, you can do."

But, he stressed, it's also a good idea to be practical.

"Go to college. Get a degree," said Chancellor, who graduated from Virginia Tech in 2010 with a degree in human development. "You don't want to just finish football and have nothing to do."

He might be making millions now, he said, but "that won't last forever."

Christina Sutton of Norfolk thanked Chancellor for speaking with one of her boys. She said he'd been acting up, and Chancellor told him to stay in school and stop running around the neighborhood.

“ He’s definitely a role model for my boys,” said Sutton, whose four boys are ages 2 to 13. “It gives kids hope out there to see him. To know they can be successful. That they don’t have to be on the streets.”

Now if only Chancellor can get the Green Ninja for next year.

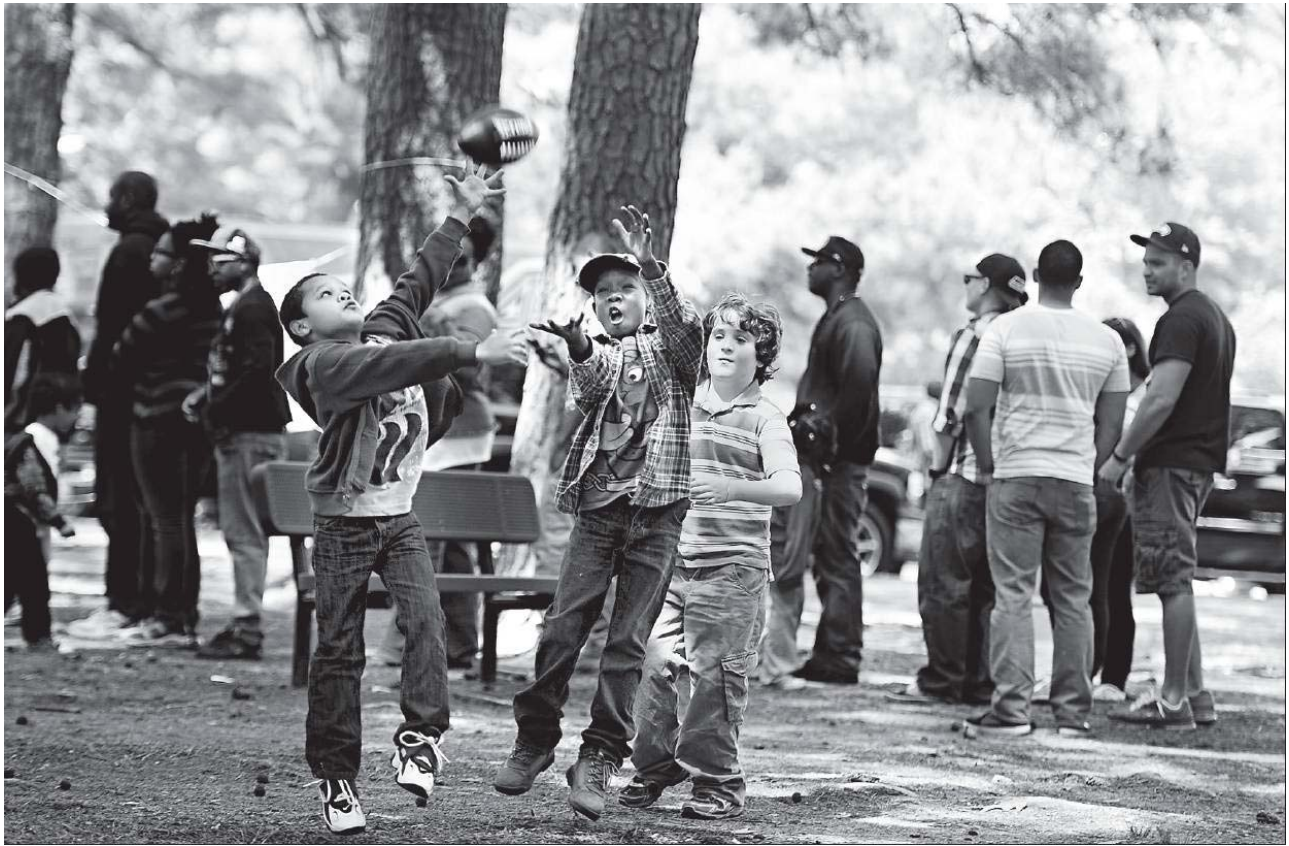
Scott Daugherty, 757-222-5221, [scott.daugherty@pilotonline.com](mailto:scott.daugherty@pilotonline.com)



AMANDA LUCIER | THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

Kam Chancellor, who grew up in Norfolk and is a safety for the Seattle Seahawks, high-fives Ryan Stephens, 9, at Lakewood Park.

---



AMANDA LUCIER | THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

From left, Drevyon Tharrington, 6, Brandon Winder, 7, and Riley Kincaid, 8, play football as people line up for food at a free cookout hosted by Maury High graduate Kam Chancellor.

---