

2023

Legacies United Youth Sports Conference Report



Dennis D. Gullick IV

Legacies United

Foundation

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On June 3rd 2023 Legacies United Foundation (LUF) hosted their Inaugural Youth Sports Conference, in collaboration with The Cheer Institute at Fieldhouse USA located in Columbus, OH. The purpose of the inaugural event was to start a community conversation on the evolution of youth sports while



emphasizing a continued focus on safety and sportsmanship, amongst this generation of young athletes and their families. We sought to provide those youth and sports providers in attendance with tools to navigate the platform sports post the COVID 19/pandemic. Essential to our

conference was a desire to educate and raise awareness of best practices, the impact technology has had on the platform of sports, along with a renewed focus on athletes and coaches' mental health. Through this inaugural event, which offered continued education and shared learning opportunities, we hoped to foster a new level of support for youth sports providers across the state along with key personnel which will strengthen our community and Inter-generational ties.

Legacies United Foundation and its leaders believe that the world of sports, while entangled in different cultures and political perspectives, has the potential to bring about some of the best outcomes for us in society. Sports of all sorts have become a pivotal component of national integration for many countries. Therefore, national sports act like a common thread connecting people to one another as a unified nation. There are various international events like the Football World Cup, and the Olympics, to local marathons, etc. which play a central role in showcasing national unity and pride. Based off that fact, we developed a cache of organizations locally and regionally that our patrons could connect with to advance their knowledge skills and abilities in the world of sports.

Planning for the Inaugural Youth Sports Conference began in July of 2022 with save the dates being sent out on January 1st, 2023. Our conference was initially planned for two days, however later switched to a one-day event to maximize our impact. We chose the beginning of June for our conference to help youth and their families gear up for summer break and summer sports among other activities. Leaders within the organization came together and developed the following logic model and strategic plan to carry out the Youth Sports Conference with sound objectives.

*Youth Sports Conference Logic Model

Inputs/Resources	Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
Resources available to support Youth Conference; money, staff, volunteers, materials	The Methods of Service Delivery carried out by Conference Ambassadors	The product delivered, unit of service provided (described numerically) # of People Served, # hours of service delivered	The First changes that occur for the individuals' families, organizations, or community because of conference	The subsequent benefit for people during or after their involvement in conference	The eventual impact on individuals, families, organizations, or community for which the conference is accountable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Manager, Event Coordinator Big Air Trampoline Park/ Fieldhouse Facility Athletes from TCI Potent Dicks Grant Merch by Chuck Potent Blue Jackets raffle gift (Need)-Sponsors Speakers First Aid Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Day Conference June 3 Vendor Rotation Keynote Speaker Breakout Sessions for Parents Youth and Providers Save The Date Flyers Fitness Stations for Youth Friendly Competition Networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 250 Youth participants between the ages of 10-18 50 Youth Service Providers 40 Vendors 25 Group CPR Certifications, First Aid 250 Youth Pledges Signed 100 Youth Service Provider Pledges signed. 10 Youth Scholarshipsard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newly established Community Service and volunteer opportunities for Youth. Youth demonstrate strategies to balance their responsibilities between engaging in sports and education. 25% of youth participants will try a sport for the first time. 100% of Youth participants will develop awareness for the culture and diversity inherent in their team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased feelings of self-worth Increase in Youth Volunteer/community service hours. Increased exchange of resources and services between providers. Youth involved in a sport will abstain from violence. Youth Participants will step into leadership roles. Youth Service Providers will build in process to offset cost for participation. Youth Service Providers will develop a resource database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 85% of participants progress to next grade level. Sustained level of quality Youth programming with city. Reduction in dropout rates Youth and Older Adults will enjoy leisure activities together. Stronger communities' ties demonstrated through games and community events. young people will be empowered to play a vital role in their own development as well as in that of their

Our project lead for this year's Conference was our very own Dennis D. Gullick IV. It was refreshing having him on the planning committee because of his background in social work and intergenerational planning. Many of our breakout sessions dealt with concepts related to our social legacies, such as **'inclusion/diversity, 'volunteering', 'social cohesion, civic pride, 'business and government partnership', 'sport participation, infrastructure, health', and 'accessibility.'**

Unlike economic and environmental legacies, which some might argue provide great benefits for several business sectors (e.g., tourism and trade) or certain locations within a host city, social legacies can, in theory, benefit all individuals and communities in a host region. Social legacies are transboundary (in terms of ethnicity, gender, and other socio-demographic categories) and perhaps more important than ever in the aftermath of the COVID outbreak when people are actively seeking reasons and opportunities to celebrate and to socialize with family and friends. At the conclusion of the Conference, we desired for participants to have strategies which would help them leverage their experiences in sports leading to greater personal development and growth in the communities they reside.

The Youth Sports Conference offered a sense of nostalgia for all involved in its planning. Many of the youth, coaches/trainers, volunteers etc. attending the event held high accolades in the world of sports at one point or another. So, giving back time in such a capacity was a mere act of their love for the game and to share lessons learned. Many of us have also watched the platform of youth sports change dramatically; from the way we engage with each other, to the amount of time kids spend training and even more, the cost to play. Youth sports are big business. It is so huge that we can only guess how large it has grown. Studies had shown annual estimates ranging from \$21 million all the way to \$35 million in revenue generated from children involved in sports aged 5 to 18. So, we as a community have a responsibility to protect this platform and ensure that our youth receive quality services and that our providers are properly trained, compensated, and empowered.



On the Morning of the Conference guest were greeted with music and light refreshments as they entered the venue. Additionally, they received the official Youth Sports Conference T-shirt, conference badge, and group assignments for the day. Brutus the Buckeye entertained guests along with a host of vendors which lined the corridor of the facility offering information on various



programs and services tied to the world of sports.

We wanted our conference to cater to the novice as well as experienced athletes and their coaches. As guests filled the facility our 1st breakout session was held by Care Counts Consulting. Ms. Daphne Counts (Owner) hosted several interactives on First Aid/CPR/AED which allowed participants to get certified on the spot.

Staff from The Cheer Institute attended this session and received support and encouragement from special guest "Brutus the Buckeye" as they

worked through the various hands-on activities. This session was very interactive and engaging and provided participants with the basic skills to intervene during a medical emergency.

As the day progressed our host Doug Worthington, from The Driven Foundation offered a powerful opening message to our youth participants and guests on overcoming adversity. He shared his story of success in the NFL as well as challenges he faced on his path of growth and development. His insight offered a perspective on nurturing our mental health, the power of therapy and self-grace. All in attendance for this session were surely impacted by his message and given some tips for how to avoid common pitfalls during life's journey.



Following Mr. Worthington's opening remarks Dr. Samantha Bates from The Ohio State University College of Social Work moved forward with her dynamic presentation. She introduced to the group new initiatives she's leading through the Department, both of which focus on positive youth development and year-round programming. LiFE Sports, in partnership with OHSAA, is working to change the landscape of coach training in Ohio.

Coach Beyond is a series of coach education sessions designed to ensure Ohio coaches are prepared to support whole child development. Youth view their coaches as role models and mentors. We know that a child who has one or more caring adults in his/her life is more likely to succeed in adulthood.

The goal of LiFE Sports has been to even the playing field by engaging youth, especially those from diverse circumstances, in sports activities designed to enhance social skills. During Dr. Bates interactive sessions youth participated in activities which reinforced personal accountability, self-confidence, and teamwork. Each activity that she offered was reinforced by a message to the coaches and



volunteers to remain steadfast in their approach to developing leaders, managing stress & pressure as coaches. We chose to partner with Dr. Bates who served as our moderator throughout the day and her



team, given their work in this space which reflects our growing perspective. Youth are strongly influenced by sports and through sports, youth can be taught invaluable social skills that will stay with them throughout their lives.

Why do these facts matter? For starters, they show how influential youth sports are but not without exposing how distorted they have become. Statistics show that youth sports in its purest form is a wonderful learning and

growing experience for kids. The bond that is additionally formed between the athlete, their family and coaches is priceless. We hoped to further cultivate a shared perspective on what it meant to run a successful youth program amongst our coaches and volunteers, as well as how to develop a well-rounded scholar athlete.

As we approached mid-day of our Conference, we broke for lunch, which was catered by Love's Pastries and Designs, a local Caterer from the Linden Community. Conference goers were able to secure a box lunch which featured one of two types of wraps, a bag of chips cookies and drink. The cost to participate in this year's conference was \$35 per participant which covered entry into the Conference as well as time at Big Air Trampoline Park for our youth competitions.



Ahead of the Conference we were able to secure a host of donations which allowed us to offset the cost for youth to participate at a low cost and for Providers to receive their First Aid CPR Certification.

Dj Udel provided a mix of good music to entertain conference goers as they ate and visited with the various vendors. During this break the youth were asked to complete a pledge which would signify their agreement to engage in sports in a positive manner. Youth coaches and volunteers were also asked to complete a pledge which would align them with a positive set of standards when developing young athletes. We were blessed to have great participation in our survey pledges. (See both surveys attached)



Following lunch, conference participants gathered in the main room for our afternoon sessions. We were blessed to start the afternoon with a full panel discussion on utilizing the platform of sports to improve our plight. What made this session so rich was our panelist of former professional athletes and businessman; From the likes of Superbowl Champion Mike Doss to Gym Owner and serial entrepreneur Kenny Crump. Essential to their messages was believing in oneself, seeking out knowledge and developing a growth mindset.

Their examples and life testimonies served as evidence that anything is possible. The session was very intimate with plenty of stories shared about the importance of perseverance, confidence, and teamwork. Many of the youth spoke about the challenges they face today when striving to meet their goals. We were able to uncover some of the trauma that they sit with daily. The level of transparency that flowed through the room was unbelievable and our moderator did a great job with active





listening and framing the questions for our discussion.

During the panel we gave a specific focus to the importance of developing and empowering our female athletes. Coach Erika Gullick, owner of The Cheer Institute, shared highlights from her journey through sports which began at just three years old. She went on to compete at every level, from little league to competitive all-star, collegiate and professional. After cheering at The Ohio State University for four years as an undergraduate, she went on to join the coaching staff at North Carolina

State as the first non-alumni assistant coach. Eventually she went on to cheer professionally for the Columbus Destroyers before opening The Cheer Institute in December of 2015.

As Coach Erika put it during her talk with the group, “Females Can Do All Things” and the World needs more bold and confident women leaders. She shared with the group that she never would have made it if she had not trusted in herself and believed what her coaches and support system imagined possible! They fueled her passion and pushed her to stretch her boundaries. Following the conference Coach Erika revealed that she would be launching “Girls Take on Sports” (GTOS) an initiative to support and promote female leadership in sports. Whether becoming a team captain, coach, or maybe even a referee, GTOS would be there with resources, financial and emotional support. To sign up or to obtain more information on GTOS visit us @ TCICheer.com.



Following our panel discussion we had a live performance by Walter Brewer, leader of Stay Out the Streets, a mentoring project dedicated towards curbing gun violence and promoting the success of youth in arts and academic. Affectionately known as Wallabe- The Realest, he serves as a qualified mental health professional, motivational and visual storyteller, and philosopher. His high energy Stay Out the Streets edutainment program delivers uniquely crafted motivational sessions through his unique W.O.R.T.H execution model. His presentation offered youth the following takeaways and perspective:



WORTH: Know your worth develop high self-esteem and character. Be respectful, considerate, and compassionate in all your ways.

OVERCOMING: Develop the skill of conflict resolution to be able to transfer negative energy into positive a productive force.

REBUILDING: Be open to the uniqueness of other races and cultures. Seek opportunities to build healthy relationships by



celebrating our individual differences along with our common community thread, to combat prejudice.

TEACHING: Never stray from good teaching like how to budget, save, avoid debt, and invest.

HEALTH: Develop a love for your natural skills and strengths but challenge yourself always. Strive for peace and unity in your spiritual, physical, and mental health.

Coach- Ron Lewis

Worthington
Kilbourne High
School

The Ohio State
University



Following Wallabe's dynamic performance, we moved into some physical activity and friendly competition. The goal of this session was to create a safe space for our youth to demonstrate their abilities while challenging them to explore and develop new skills. Our Theme for the Day was "Find Your Strength" This mantra set the stage for the whole day. We wanted the youth to get comfortable with the fact that no matter what sport they chose to play, they would have to be conditioned, competitive and committed. This session was led by Ron Lewis, former Ohio State University Basketball player and Head Coach of Worthington Kilbourne Boys Varsity Basketball. Coach Lewis was perfect for this session given the foundation he has laid for himself and his family via the world of sports. He shared some of his story, before DJ Udell spun some records and got everyone out their seat for some afternoon fun.

We had several pre-arranged stations in addition to Coach Lewis offering a 30-minute skill and drill session. Youth participants based off their earlier group placement came up with team names and chants to get themselves going. We utilized Big Air's



Trampoline Park, which featured a ropes course, rock climbing wall and battle beam.

We also developed a few stations for coaches and volunteers to participate in our open challenges. They included pull up/pushups, shuttle runs and box jumps.

With Rotations happening every 30 minutes our volunteers also got a bit of a workout!!! The session was hit with 100% participation. Many of the Youth expressed that during their group workouts they really felt like they were part of a team. They said that it felt good to challenge themselves knowing it was for the good of the group. That was a big Win for us!!! It felt good to hear this feedback from the youth and to see the smiles, knowing that for just a moment in time many of those youth felt like they were a part of something special.

At the conclusion of our workout and friendly competition session Coach Lewis brought us together for a closing message. He offered a call to action to everyone in the room especially the youth to “Be Better, Do Better and Want Better” for yourself and your community.



He emphasized that we are all in this together and it's going to take each of us doing our part to enhance and preserve our community and way of Life. Lastly Dennis D. Gullick our conference lead announced and celebrated several standout scholar athletes for their achievements on and off the battlefield. He further announced that because of a successful Conference several youth would be receiving a partial financial scholarship to participate in a sport of their choice through the end of Year. Additionally, one lucky organization would receive a \$500 cash to support their standard operations with another organization receiving in-kind support with fundraising efforts.

To extend the energy and knowledge gained from the conference, leaders from LUF developed the Youth Sports Leadership Academy and Girls Take on Sports initiative to serve youth and their families Year-Round (See Flyer Attached). Our goal is to track each youth participant that engages with our YSLA and GTOS initiatives for 3-5 years; supporting them in their journey towards self-sufficiency. We also have planned to engage with each youth sports provider or coach who participated in the Conference, quarterly through our email list-serv and coaches meetup.

Hopefully this Conference Report demonstrates to you our vision and efforts towards enhancing the platform of Youth Sports. In 2024 we are looking to host an even bigger conference with much more learning and activity for our intergenerational sports community. We'd like to take a minute here to recognize a few of our partners that made this such an extraordinary event. First up Ms. Daphne Counts- Care Counts Consulting, Doug Worthington- Driven Foundation, Samantha Bates- Ohio State Life Sports, Mike Doss- Superbowl Champion Athlete, Chantel Spencer- Lolita's Artistry, Kenny Crump- Gym Skills, Dee Miller- Former OSU Athlete, Erika Gullick- The Cheer Institute, Sports and Spinal One Cherone Hood- Junior Coach, Heaven Angel- Junior Coach, WallabeTheRealest- Entrepreneur, Ron



Lewis- Former Professional Athlete Richard Anderson- Junior Football League of Westerville, BACA Cheer and Dance Big Air Trampoline Park. Each of these vendors offered interactive stations for all our patrons. Participants were able to gain insight on how to choose a sport along with the various criteria and rules to participate. Please take a moment to reflect on some of the conference highlights from 2023 below; and for more information and details on our 2024 Youth Sports Conference visit us @ LegaciesUnite.Org. Again, Thank you to all our sponsors and supporters. We could not have done this without you.

Blessings!

Short-term Outcomes: Initial Highlights

Total # Youth Participants= 30	Total # Coaches Pledges Signed- 12
Total # Youth Coaches/ Providers= 12	Scholarships Awarded: 5
Total # Speakers for Event= 12	Youth With New Sport Enrollment:3
Total # Vendors= 3	Sport College Visits: 5
Special Guest: Brutus Buckeye- OSU Life sports	College Commit: 2
Total # Staff trained on First Aid/CPR AED- 10	TCI Junior Coaches- Added 6
Total # Youth Pledges Signed- 30	Establishment of Youth Sports Leadership Academy (Cohort #1: 10 Youth)