



“Moving from Complaint to Possibility...from Planning to Implementation”

Athletes

Historically athletes have been in a unique position to influence society. They have the responsibility of being good role models. Youth continue to look up to athletes at all levels – high school, college and professional – and they will mimic or imitate what they see them do, whether their behavior is positive or negative. Therefore athletes should:

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- **Speak** articulately without using profanity.
- **Dress** appropriately for all occasions.
- **Act** politely and treat everyone they encounter with respect.
- **Utilize** their unique position to reach out and share positive messages with minority communities and beyond.
- **Complete** their own education and encourage others to do the same. Persons with high school diplomas and/or college degrees are less likely to be involved with anti-social or illegal behavior. Athletes should, therefore, use the discipline learned within their chosen sport, off the field, in their daily lives and in the community.
- **Take** responsibility for being aware of, and sensitive to, the issues in the community in which they are employed and live in during the season and perhaps off-season as well.
- **Participate** in community events when invited to do so and develop responsible connections to the community. Use the concept of team spirit to mobilize the community. It takes the efforts of *everyone*, including athletes, to heal the community. Team spirit, therefore, becomes community spirit.
- **Demonstrate** and share that athletes have to deal with the same kinds of issues and problems faced by many other people.

Professional Athletes

Professional Athletes are in a unique position to gain access to people in power at a level not available to the average citizen. In addition to the above stated responsibilities, professional athletes have an extremely powerful opportunity to impact the violence in the communities where they play. Therefore professional athletes should:

- **Support**, organizations that provide needed services for children living within the various communities with their time, talents and treasures.

- **Freely** donate their time for occasions throughout the year in the various communities to show their partnership with the cities from which they gain their livelihood. Such participation could enhance the financial success of many community events.
- **Consider** forming their own foundations; holding major annual fundraising events to benefit charities of their own choosing; providing funds and other resources for smaller events such as school and/or community events; repairing recreational facilities; building new facilities, such as community or wellness centers; providing recreational equipment, uniforms, books for libraries; and so on. Professional athletes could also provide scholarships for youth or others from disadvantaged communities.
- **Partner** with the business and corporate community in carrying out the action points identified in the Coalition Against Violence 2008 anti-violence document and support the anti-violence initiatives of other organizations and agencies.