

It Takes A Team!

Education Campaign For Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues in Sports

With a generous start-up challenge grant initiated by tennis great Martina Navratilova and the leadership of It Takes A Team! (ITAT) Director Dr. Pat Griffin, the Women's Sports Foundation is taking a major role in combating homophobia in women's and men's sport with the goals of:

- Eliminating discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) people in sport, with an emphasis on youth, high school and college sports
- Eliminating homophobia in sport that discourages anyone, regardless of sexual orientation, from participating
- Developing and disseminating educational resources promoting equality and respect for LGBT people in sport for use by athletic administrators, coaches, athletes and parents
- Helping coaches and athletic administrators with their legal and ethical responsibilities to create an athletic climate that is safe and respectful for all
- Assisting schools in developing policies to address the needs of transgender athletes while also addressing issues of competitive fairness for all athletes
- Becoming the premier source of education about LGBT issues in sport for athletic administrators, coaches, athletes and parents in youth sports programs and high school and college athletics

Program Successes

- Developed an up-to-date and comprehensive education kit and Web site (www.ItTakesaTeam.org), video, action guides for coaches, athletes, administrators and parents; information and resource lists of tools for dealing with LGBT issues in sport; It Takes A Team! poster; and safe zone stickers that present spaces as safe for LGBT people
- Developed collaborative relationships with 16 national sports, education and advocacy organizations who endorse ITAT goals, such as Outsports.com, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, and the Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network
- Developed a monthly ITAT e-newsletter and developed an audience of 2,180 key athletic personnel and school and community-based organizations



*"The bottom line for those who deliver this educational program is the creation of educational environments in which respect is the dominant value."
— Billie Jean King*

- Distributed more than 1,000 ITAT kits over the last six years through Web site inquiries, complimentary distribution and at ITAT conference presentations

Program Effectiveness

Completed preliminary evaluation of attitudes about lesbian and gay teammates and coaches among 300 student-athletes in 23 different sports at nine schools before and after viewing and discussing the ITAT video, with the following results:

- A positive shift toward more acceptance of lesbian and gay teammates and coaches from pre to post test in all 10 survey items.
- Before watching the ITAT video, 300 student-athletes had a mean score of 26.22 (max = 49 negative, min = 10 positive); after the students watched the video, the mean dropped to 24.58, which represents a statistically significant positive attitude change toward lesbian and gay athletes and coaches in sport.

Challenges Remain

- Negative recruiting based on homophobia in women's college sports is a major obstacle to fair and equitable athletic participation for all women athletes and stigmatizes lesbian coaches and athletes.

- Anti-gay and anti-female name-calling in boys' and men's athletics are commonly accepted taunts from coaches to motivate greater effort by athletes and from athletes to demean opponents.
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual athletes and coaches are reluctant to be open about their sexual orientation out of fear of discrimination.
- Young girls are discouraged from participation in athletics because of negative stereotypes of lesbians in sport.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender high school and college athletes are coming out earlier and with greater expectations of fair treatment in athletics.
- Our goal is to reach seven million student-athletes and 52,000 coaches through direct programming conducted by 26 national sport or LGBT organizations, 50 state sport organizations, 130 school districts and programs at 183 state, regional and national conventions.
- Affect widespread dissemination of ITAT education resources to youth sport programs, high schools and colleges

Funding Request

- Funding of \$200,000 will allow for 3,000 kits to be distributed over two years and cover the cost of staffing, promoting the Web site, visits to 50 colleges and high schools across the country, training at 30 conferences for coaches, administrators, counselors and more to educate and promote respect for all.
- It Takes A Team! Educational Curriculum for LGBT Issues in Sport (donor-directed funds) has its own staff and operating budget of \$125,000, which allows distribution of a curriculum and DVDs to educational institutions and others seeking to address diversity issues in athletics. Gifts towards this work will expand the reach to leaders in sports institutions.