

Sports Matter

Have you ever been asked, “*What sport did you play growing up?*” or “*Who are you rooting for in the big game this weekend?*”. I’m sure most of you reading this have. Whether you’re a player, a fan, or a bystander, It’s no secret that sports are a vital and captivating part of our culture. People find themselves within sport, and often tie a large part of their sport to their identity. The reason they are so tied to our culture and identity, is because playing sports goes far beyond athleticism. The best athletes know that not only does the body get stronger, but the mind as well. Getting involved in sports at an early age can teach key values, like a strong work ethic, teamwork, and good sportsmanship.

Opportunities like this should be available to **ALL** children.

Often many sports have a significant cost added onto it that prevents many young children from reaching their maximum potential. If it’s not the cost of equipment, then it’s team fees, and if it’s not the team fees then it’s travel costs. There is always a hidden cost for something that every child should be able to enjoy.

On the low end, the average American family spends \$1000 on a child’s sports activities **every year.**

Many parents may be faced with the dilemma of stopping their child’s extracurriculars, or affording basic necessities. It’s time for my peers to lend a helping hand to our communities that are struggling, because a good company gives back to the ones who have given us the most.

Even the best athletes recognize the need to give back to their community. For example, former Philadelphia Eagles player Jason Kelce and his wife Kylie donated money to the family of US Women's hockey player Laila Edwards, in order for them to see her play in the 2026 Milano Cortina Olympics. Without their help, Laila would not have been able to have her family there as she won gold.

During my time at Dick's Sporting Goods, we have worked hard to ensure we are giving back to the communities that need it the most. For nearly 12 years, our Sports Matter foundation has helped over 2 million children and committed over \$100 Million to young athletes for equipment, registration fees, and league costs. We are committed to making sure every child gets the support they need, because not only does sports matter, sports is culture.

Strategy Note

This thought leadership piece is designed to be included in business magazines, urging other business leaders the importance of giving back to your community. Focusing on Dick's Sporting Goods' social efforts was the right decision considering how much the company has done to give back to local communities. This aligns more with the company's messaging than an environmental piece, because it shows how much they actually care about their consumers through the Sports Matter foundation. Additionally, including a timely example like that of Jason Kelce shows how prevalent this issue is.