

Inspirations

CARIS SPORTS FOUNDATION LAUNCHES TO ELIMINATE FINANCIAL BARRIERS FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED YOUTH TO PLAY SPORTS

Scholarships Will Cover Costs for Recreational and Competitive Sports so All Children Have an Equal Opportunity to Experience the Benefits of Team Activities

Raquel McNabb, wife of 6x NFL Pro-Bowler and NFL commentator, Donovan McNabb, has formally launched a new philanthropic initiative: Caris Sports Foundation. This 501(c)(3) organization gives young people the opportunity to participate in organized sports by providing scholarship awards that remove financial obstacles that typically keep children on the sidelines.

For decades, studies have consistently shown that children who participate in sports are more likely to attend and graduate from college, earn more in their careers, and avoid drugs and criminal activity. This is in addition to the well documented physical and mental health benefits of participating in recreational and competitive sports. Such benefits include learning teamwork and problem solving to reach goals, gaining a sense of accomplishment, boosting self-esteem, and lessons on winning and losing with grace.

However, compounding financial considerations (fees, equipment, travel costs, etc.) often preclude families from lower-income backgrounds from incorporating club and competitive sports as an activity for children. The average cost for expenses associated with club sports is \$2,500, while the cost associated with recreational club sports is \$150. Caris Sports Foundation and its supporters will now provide scholarships to cover those expenses

so that all young athletes are able to participate in sports.

“I was fortunate to be able to play both club and competitive sports throughout my youth and it changed the trajectory of my life,” said Donovan McNabb, Official Spokesperson for Caris Sports Foundation. “Access to sports shouldn’t be limited to those who have the financial resources to play. Income affects sports participation — we want to provide opportunities for all youths that want to play to be able to play, regardless of financial status.”

Participation at the club and competitive sports levels skew toward families that have a higher socioeconomic status. In fact, recent studies show that only 34 percent of kids aged 6 to 12 from families with a household income of \$25,000 or less played team sports, compared to 69 percent of kids from families with household incomes of \$100,000 or more. Caris Sports Foundation scholarships aim to level the playing field and create more opportunities for underprivileged youth to play sports.

Scholarship opportunities are currently open to full-time students in grades K-12 that are Arizona residents. Scholarships may be applied to any team sport, including but not limited to, football, baseball/softball, soccer, basketball, gymnastics, and hockey. With plans

to expand to additional areas of the country forthcoming, 100 percent of funds raised will be distributed as scholarships.

“We are passionate about leveling the playing field so that all youth have an equal opportunity to play organized sports,” said Raquel McNabb, founder of Caris Sports Foundation. “We’re excited for families in Arizona, and across the country, to benefit from these scholarships.”

McNabb founded the charity alongside three other local mothers of athletes determined to help provide opportunities for the disadvantaged kids they witness in the club sports system: Ashley Schugg, Nicole Hawkins, and Jennifer Kruse. “Our goal is to reach those populations where the income is nonexistent without federal aid and go in there and provide outlets to these children...and start a movement,” said Ashley Schugg, Board Member, Caris Sports Foundation. ■



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