



“Go4It Sports Club aims to help alleviate the difficulties of cultural and racial integration through the incorporation of common ground via various sports activities and events, designed to encourage and ease immigrants assimilating into a new or different culture.”

PC.SHDM.NGO/15/12
24 April 2012

Go4It Sports Club: “Integration through Sports” ENGLISH only

**Statement to the Supplemental Human Dimension Meeting on Combating Racism,
Intolerance and Discrimination in Society through Sport**

**Session III: Sporting Events as Confidence-Building Measures and the Role of Sport in
the Promotion of Integration and Equality**

As Delivered by Alonso Barrett

20 April 2012

My name is Alonzo Barrett. I was born in Denver, Colorado and I've been playing sports since I can remember. Although I love most sports my heart has always stayed with American football, I've played organized football since the age of seven and doing so has provided me with great opportunities. Upon completion of high school, I was awarded a full athletic scholarship to the University of Colorado to play football. This fulfilled a lifelong dream of mine. Upon graduating from university I was offered the opportunity to play professional football in Vienna, Austria for the Raiffeisen Vikings. This gave me the first chance to leave my home country. While playing football, I was able to experience a completely new society while also finding the love of my life my wife, the former Ms. Tamara Poellmann. While living in Vienna the past 4 years, I have seen a lack of community in sports and even more alarming I have found that many children are not awarded the opportunity to try new sports they may have an interest in. This alarms me because I know that I would not be the man I am today without sports and the individuals I met while playing sport.

Growing up in Denver, Colorado my family moved constantly which forced me to have to assimilate to new surroundings. The main constant that remained in my life was my passion for sports. No matter where my family moved I would always join the local sports team. This provided me with a platform to meet other children on a common ground and allow us to work together to reach a common goal. The biggest side effect of this proved to be the friendships that I created and maintain to this day. Many of the kids that I have played sports with are still close friends, the significant part of the friendships I have created through sports is the fact that I never would have otherwise had the opportunity to meet these people and get to know them on a personal level. Sports didn't just allow me to meet kids that play a game we have in common but instead provided me to build personal bonds with teammates and opponent's and breakdown many stereotypes and misinformation. One of the bonds that I formed through sports was with a teammate whose father was a member of the Ku Klux Klan and grew up in a racist household. Sports forced my friend to look past our differences and truly know and understand each other on a personal level. Sports allowed us to have an open dialogue on race by providing us with a common ground to build off.

These experiences inspired me to establish Go4It Sports Club. This initiative acknowledges the persistence of racism still in existence today and many its associated injustices. Go4It Sports Club has taken the stance of choosing to lead by example, with the intent to combat racism by finding solutions to the problem that exist within our societies. Much of the bias and intolerance that exist in the world is a product of lack of adequate



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information and isolated negative personal experiences with persons of different races and/or cultures.

On many occasions racism is fought after the injustice has already happened and after its effects have already been felt. Go4It Sports Club was founded on the belief that sports is one of the few things in this world that allows us to look past all our differences and come together for a common goal, while also teaching discipline, self esteem, and respect for others.

Go4It Sports Club aims to combat racism through preventative measures that will allow people to meet one another on a common ground and truly build a human experience with one another. Go4It Sports Club feels that the programs with the purpose of having a preexisting common ground would be most beneficial to society, these programs allow social, racial, and cultural barriers to be broken down naturally.

Go4It Sports Club was founded on the principle of uplifting kids and communities through the avenue of sports. People, and especially children, undergo a major life adjustment when moving to a foreign land. The difficulties of learning a new language, local culture, people, and a different way of life, can be a very challenging task. Go4It Sports Club has created a sports program that focuses on integration with sports, with the main focus being breaking down the language barriers, meeting new people, cultural customs exchange, and uplifting the overall mental and physical state of each person.

Go4It Sports Club is working to develop three (3) different types of sports integration programs.

1. Go4It Sports Club “Meet and Greet” - This program would be aimed at providing a platform for locals and already integrated citizens involved with sports programs, to welcome new members and give them a chance to get to know each other and also provide information on sports programs in the area.
2. Go4It Sports Extravaganza - Sports Extravaganza would be a sports festival held bi-monthly that seeks to provide a routine opportunity for people to try new sports and meet new people in a joyful setting.
3. Go4It Integration Sports Teams - Form official sports teams for Football, Basketball, and American Football with players wishing to absorb local culture and play sports.

Governments should support civil society initiatives like the programs of Go4It Sports and invest in youth programs that foster interaction with the diverse ethnic communities within the participating States of the OSCE. Additionally, the OSCE should utilize its field missions and centers to encourage sports programs, as well as include youth development in initiatives to combat discrimination and prevent hate crimes.

Thank you, Ms. Moderator.