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LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDER

Looking back, 2022 has been a year of tremendous challenges, groundbreaking progress, and historic firsts. Over 300 bills were introduced targeting the LGBTQI+ community, 18 states now ban transgender youth from playing the sports they love, and anti-trans violence has been on the rise.

We know that a better world is possible when we create athletic spaces that are safe and welcoming for all, and when athletes use their platforms to champion equality. Athlete Ally has been hard at work bringing comprehensive LGBTQI+ education to athletes and coaches, advocating for inclusive policies at all levels of sport, mobilizing a growing tide of athlete activists, and pioneering research into the state of LGBTQI+ inclusion in athletics.

Now more than ever, we need to grow the global community of athletes, coaches and fans cultivating allyship, empathy and compassion in and through sports.

» LGBTQI+ education opens minds, challenges misconceptions and helps ensure athletic communities are welcoming to all. We bring trainings on LGBTQI+ respect and inclusion to athletic communities at all levels, including sport governing bodies, teams, and individual athletes. To date, we’ve visited over 200 schools to conduct in-person trainings, and trained every incoming NBA player in the past 8 years.

» Athlete Ally works with school athletic departments, teams, leagues, governing bodies, and partners across the globe to develop and support policies that reflect the diversity of the athletes impacted by them.

» We were a key stakeholder in the development of the International Olympic Committee’s groundbreaking new framework on Fairness, Inclusion and Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity and Sex Variations. Unlike previous guidelines, the framework underscores that no athlete has an inherent advantage and underscores the critical importance of centering inclusivity and nondiscrimination within sport policy.

» Research provides us with the data and resources needed to outline critical gaps in LGBTQI+ inclusion in a variety of athletic spaces, from academic institutions to the unique experiences of LGBTQI+ sport officials.

Our Athletic Equality Index ranking of LGBTQ-inclusive policies and programs at NCAA athletic departments impacts 4 million students nationwide, and provides schools with a blueprint for how best to model inclusion.

» Athlete Ally Ambassadors include 450+ LGBTQI+ and allied Professional, Olympic and Paralympic athletes dedicated to using their platforms to call for equality in and through sport. From working with Athlete Ally Ambassador Brianna Turner to speak out against anti-transgender athlete legislation in Georgia to mobilizing Megan Rapinoe and other Ambassadors to sign amicus briefs in support of transgender youth, we are tremendously proud to work with athletes who join us in seeing sport as a true equalizer.

With your partnership and support, we can build on the successes and lessons learned this year to make 2023 a year of even greater impact. Thank you for fighting alongside us.

Together,

Hudson Taylor
Founder & Executive Director
Our vision is liberation for every sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression in sport. As a leading national nonprofit working at the intersection of sport and LGBTQI+ equality and one of the only LGBTQI+ sport social justice organizations in the U.S., Athlete Ally works to end the structural and systemic oppression that isolates, excludes, and endangers LGBTQI+ people in sport. Our efforts focus on education, sport policy research and change, and athlete activism. We focus on policies and practices, while never forgetting that changing hearts and minds is what allows us to propel our work forward.

Mission
Activate athletic communities to exercise their leadership to eliminate homophobia and transphobia in sport.
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Staff and Board listing is current as of December 31, 2022.
WHAT WE DO

40+ Campus Chapters

250+ LGBTQI+ Respect and Inclusion Trainings

4 million Students impacted by the Athletic Equality Index

9 The number of consecutive years Athlete Ally has trained every incoming NBA player on LGBTQI+ respect and inclusion

400+ Athlete Ally Ambassadors

74k+ Organizational Digital Reach

As an out gay Olympian, I know what a difference it makes to be able to be fully who I am in all parts of my life, including my sport. I want every athlete to feel like they belong in athletics, from youth sports up to the Olympics. Representation is so important, and I’m personally excited that this year we’ll be seeing our first ever openly LGBTQI+ Winter Olympian, Timothy LeDuc.

At the end of the day, the fact that we are all humans is more important than sport, and sometimes that message gets flipped around.
Athlete Ally believes that everyone should have equal access, opportunity, and experience in sports — regardless of your sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.
LGBTQI+ education opens minds, challenges misconceptions and helps ensure athletic communities are welcoming to all. We bring trainings on LGBTQ respect and inclusion to athletic communities at all levels, including sport governing bodies, teams, and individual athletes. To date, we’ve visited over 200 schools to conduct in-person trainings, and trained every incoming NBA player in the past 8 years.

Another critical aspect of our education work is our Campus program, which works to equip athletes with the tools they need to drive change on their campuses and in their communities. We added more than 20 new Campus Chapters last year, and are now reaching more than 500 college athletes across the country with critical resources and trainings to scale up their campus and community activism. We are incredibly proud of our campus chapter at Columbia-Barnard, which was honored with an Athlete Ally Action Award this year in recognition of their incredible advocacy.

Together with adidas, this past year we convened student athletes from across the country at The University of Miami for an impactful and energizing Athlete Leadership Summit. With Athlete Ally Ambassador Layshia Clarendon and student athletes from across the country, we led trainings and conducted interactive workshops about fostering allyship and inclusion in and through sports.

We see our education work as a trickle-down approach to building the kind of world we want to see: each athlete who learns how to shut down homophobic “locker room talk”, each coach who introduces themselves with their pronouns, and each fan who waves a rainbow flag at their team’s Pride night inspires those around them to call for equality.
POLICY

“Athlete Ally has been an invaluable partner in the state legislative work over the last few years. Since we’ve seen this rise of anti-transgender bills that focus on youth in sport, Athlete Ally has been at the front of the fight supporting folks on the ground, being the conduit between us and national and international sports news, and really helping to translate and understand what’s happening, why things matter and what the historical context is.”

Vivian Topping, Director of Advocacy & Civic Engagement, Equality Federation

Policies have the power to shape the course of someone’s life. Inclusive, proactive policies give trans athletes the ability to experience the lifesaving power of sports along with their cisgender teammates. Reactive policies that only come in response to homophobia or transphobia are temporary solutions, but don’t address the larger issue of how to ensure that inclusion is more than an afterthought.

We work with school athletic departments, teams, leagues, governing bodies, and partners across the globe to develop and support policies that reflect the diversity of the athletes impacted by them. From developing comprehensive Fan Codes of Conduct to nondiscrimination policies and trans inclusion policies, we work to make sure that sport is truly a place for all. Athlete Ally was a key stakeholder in the development of the International Olympic Committee’s groundbreaking new framework on Fairness, Inclusion and Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity and Sex Variations. Unlike previous guidelines, the framework underscores that no athlete has an inherent advantage and moves away from eligibility criteria focused on testosterone levels. We have already seen a powerful ripple effect from this global policy not only on the playing field, but in how the public as a whole thinks about transgender athletes and athletes with intersex variations.
“I’m infuriated by the harmful political attacks on the human rights and protection of trans youth. Our children deserve to be loved and protected unconditionally. The facts are that trans healthcare is safe and trans women and girl athletes are not a threat. LGBTQI+ inclusion in sports is important to me because it is me. As a Black bisexual athlete, I’m always going to show up for my community. I’m honored to use my platform as an Athlete Ally Ambassador to educate and amplify the triumphs and joys of our LGBTQI+ community.”

Jasmine Thomas, Connecticut Sun, WNBA and Athlete Ally Ambassador

Athlete Ally Pro Ambassadors include 400+ LGBTQI+ and allied Professional, Olympic and Paralympic athletes dedicated to using their platforms to calling for equality in and through sport. We work closely with each Ambassador to identify the issues close to their heart, and how we can help them grow and draw upon their unique skills to make a difference.

From working with Athlete Ally Ambassador Lori Lindsey to speak out against anti-transgender athlete legislation in Missouri to mobilizing Jasmine Thomas and other Ambassadors to sign amicus briefs in support of transgender youth and abortion access, we are constantly reminded of the power of community. We are tremendously proud to work with athletes who join us in seeing sport as a true equalizer – a place where each of us deserves to be exactly who we are.
“I was the first trans kid on my wrestling team. Having a resource like the AEI that lets me know if coaches and teams are inclusive, that this is even on their radar, is so important. I don’t think I’d be comfortable going to a school if they weren’t thinking of inclusion.”

High school wrestler Aryn Bucci-Mooney

Research provides insight into critical gaps in the LGBTQI+ inclusion of a variety of athletic spaces. Led by our Director of Research, seven Adidas x Athlete Ally Research Fellows, Athlete Ally’s affiliated scholars, and a group of part-time or volunteer researchers, our team provides expert analysis on how we build athletic spaces that are inclusive and welcoming for all.

In 2022, we furthered the powerful impact of the Athletic Equality Index (AEI), Athlete Ally’s marquee research initiative. The AEI measures the LGBTQI+ inclusivity of athletic departments by focusing on practices and policies that create safe, inclusive, and equitable environments for the LGBTQI+ community in collegiate sport. Our team conducts a full, annual audit of all schools’ policies and practices and offers free consultations with any D-I athletic departments, institutions, conference offices, and conference commissioners interested in learning how they can offer more inclusive policies and practices for the LGBTQ+ community. Schools’ AEI scores and further information on the AEI are all regularly updated on our evergreen website: aei.athleteally.org.

In 2022, our team was able to develop two backend systems to support the website including a robust communications tracking system through Salesforce and a data and statistics analytics system via SPSS. With these in place, we expanded our communication with D-I schools from 62.6% (having consulted with 221 of 353 schools in 2021) to 64.8% (232 of 358 in 2022). On January 1, 2022, the average score of all institutions was 36.2 out of 100.0. Today, the average is 39.0, a significant score increase. This year’s report, which affects an estimated 4 million students nationwide, points to a concerning lack of comprehensive resources, policies, and practices for LGBTQ+ students. With proper information and training, athletes and staff can better understand how to be allies to the LGBTQ+ community and foster inclusive policies.
In 2022, two of our AEI Research Fellows created and sustained ongoing initiatives around inclusion in NCAA sport. Abigail Kurtz started hosting meetings - Gathering Religiously Affiliated Colleges for Education (GRACE) - in which administrators, coaches, and athletes are religiously-affiliated NCAA institutions can discuss integrating diverse faith traditions into statements of inclusion and connections between the athletics department and others on campus. Ryan Socolow initiated a study on the allyship practices of supporters for transgender athletes. His is the first study to examine allyship behaviors of teammates and athletics to offer actionable recommendations to support athletes of all gender identities in sport.

Beyond the AEI, and to celebrate Pride, our Research team puts together an annual Research Roundup, a list of our favorite research readings and listenings on LGBTQ+ topics in sport. From a comprehensive review of how the International Olympic Committee’s newest framework on fairness sets novel precedents to a heartwrenching documentary on transgender (trans) youth athletes, the list includes what we consider to be the best of the best LGBTQI+ movement resources in sport from each year.

In addition, Athlete Ally examines the demographics of athletes to better understand who LGBTQ+ athletes are—studies show that LGBTQI+ athletes are more likely to experience anxiety and depression and impaired academic and athletic performance. Every other year, we survey NCAA athletes about their identities to better understand the experiences of LGBTQ+ athletes and to create spaces that are inclusive to all athletes.

Expanding beyond the NCAA, we also document the stories of LGBTQ+ athletes in the media. While LGBTQ+ athletes have received increased, and more positive, media attention in recent years, there is still an overarching erasure of LGBTQ+ athletes. Gay men received some attention and in recent years, trans women athletes were stigmatized and over-covered in the media. Still, much work needs to be done to fully capture who LGBTQ+ athletes at all levels are and how we can better support and represent them in the media.
Communications Highlights

Through 2022, we communicated the story of Athlete Ally’s work and impact in new ways to bigger audiences than ever before, Athlete Ally gained nearly 9K new social media followers across all platforms, particularly on Instagram where we saw a 42% increase. This brought us to a combined total reach of 74,500.

Athlete Ally also serves as an expert, leading voice on rapid response to breaking news on LGBTQI+ inclusion. This year saw a greater number of attacks against transgender youth than ever before, and required an equally substantial outpouring of both outrage and support. Athlete Ally was front and center in major outlets including The New York Times, TIME, ESPN, The Washington Post and more underscoring the critical issues with international bans on transgender women athletes.

The power of our work is further amplified by the athletes we work with who inspire countless fans and followers, as well as teammates and coaches. We worked with elite athletes including Olympic silver medalist swimmer Erica Sullivan on an op-ed for Newsweek in support of trans swimmer Lia Thomas, strategically placed during the NCAA championships in which the two athletes competed against each other to proactively dispel the myth that women in sports see trans women as threats to their sport.

We also welcomed a number of diverse, high profile athletes as new Athlete Ally Ambassadors, joining our global network of athletes using their platforms to champion LGBTQI+ inclusion. New Ambassadors include WNBA player Jasmine Thomas, international soccer pro Rachel Corsie, Olympic skater Eric Radford, U.S. Men’s National Soccer Team player DeAndre Yedlin, Minor League Baseball player Solomon Bates, and more.

Athlete Ally in the News

Athlete Ally worked to generate high-profile op-eds with Ambassadors and Olympic athletes, developed strategic responses to breaking news, and ensured coverage of our spokespeople and campaigns in outlets including ESPN, Sports Illustrated and more.
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CORPORATE & FOUNDATION

$100,000+
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$15,000-$24,999
- Athletic Brewing Company
- Cotton-on
- Transperfect
- Zwift

$10,000-$14,999
- Atlantic Shores Offshore Winc
- Coca-Cola
- Dow
- Inter Sport
- Just Women's Sports
- McDermott
- Will & Emery
- Morgan Stanley
- NFL
- Tawani Foundation
- USTA

In-Kind Support
- GoCharity
- Transperfect
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$25,000+  
Carin* and Roger Ehrenberg  
Joy* and Steven Bunson  
Ken Mehlman  
Nathan J. Richards-Wedge*

Major League  
$10,000-$24,999  
Dana Chaiken and Susan Roll  
Tisch Family  
Billie Jean King  
Sissy and Bill Lieberman  
Steve Wozencraft and John Evans

All-Star  
$5,000-$9,999  
Ron Ansin and Jim Stork  
Kyra Barry  
Macky Bergman-Clark  
Frank Selvaggi and Bill Shea  
Jan Steinert

Captain  
$2,500-$4,999  
Michael Balaban  
Madelyn Bucksbaum  
Beth Brooke-Marciniak  
Kerstyn Carr  
Walter Ciacci  
Jonathan Dorfman and Melissa Kaish  
Lizbeth Krupp  
Rafael Kuhn  
Tom Nichols and Dan Chadburn  
Pat Noonan*  
Rebecca Sauerbrunn  
Russ Selinger  
Mark Stephanz  
Louis Vega*  
Andrew Ward  
B. Rodney White

Varsity  
$1,500-$2,499  
Anthony Arena  
Peter Baldwin  
Kathy Behrens  
Bonnie Block  
Frances Brandon Farrow  
Shaw Brown  
Sarah Camayd-Muñoz  
Laura Clise*  
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As of December 31, 2022. Please contact Paul Lotierzo at paul.lotierzo@athleteally.org to join the list or edit any listings.

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