

United Nations
Global Alliance for ICT and Development
“Shared Responsibility and Partnership”

Program comments

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Sharing is a fundamental element in the Olympic Games. Every four years athletes from all around the globe come together to not only participate in a friendly sports competition, but also to learn about one another and form life long friendships in the process. Sport provides a special setting where the differences among people are overlooked in favor of seeing the similarities among humanity. These friendships defy the stigmas of race, creed, or color. Athletes bond with each other through the mutual respect fostered by playing by the rules and seeking excellence in their lives. From the glow of the stadium lights, a partnership for a better world is forged among all Olympians.

The first stage of this process comes through the teachers and coaches in school yards and play grounds. Young athletes learn through basic educational principles to enjoy the physical activities provided for them. Whether in organized ball games or simple foot races, young people learn to appreciate one another through participation. The second stage comes through established sports programs. Many youths learn the values of working together when they join a team effort. Here, they improve their physical and mental skills while practicing as a unit. The third stage comes about at the highest level of performance. Elite athletes demonstrate their refined abilities to achieve a specific goal. This means following a plan and being dedicated to see its outcome. These three stages produce Olympians.

Becoming an Olympian means more than going to the Olympic Games. An Olympian enters the stadium as an athlete but leaves as an ambassador of sport's highest ideals. From the sixteen days in the Olympic Village and the years of preparation to get there, an athlete acquires a sense of social responsibility unlike any other. After the days of competition have passed, many Olympians care enough to return to their towns and villages to teach the next generation of aspiring youths. They also volunteer for community service projects, from environmental clean ups to combating domestic violence to promoting cultural programs. They rarely sit down and watch the world go by! Olympians accept a challenge and inspire others to do the same. They are some of today's best role models by demonstrating personal responsibility and partnering for a common cause.

The time it takes to turn a young athlete into an Olympian is an invaluable investment in a better world for everyone.