

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF YOUTH SPORTS

“A Unified Voice For Youth Sports”



“Executive Director’s Report”

Prepared By
Sally S. Cunningham, Executive Director

Presented to the
NCYS Board of Directors and Membership

April 18th – 21st, 2006
Hyatt Regency Lexington Kentucky

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NCYS Mission Statement

The National Council of Youth Sports (NCYS) represents the youth sports industry by advancing the values of participation, and educating and developing leaders.

NCYS Vision Statement

To enhance the youth sports experience in America.



NCYS' past year has been full of energy and exciting growth for the benefit of the NCYS members and the youth sports industry. In previous years NCYS explored new territories to find its niche, the last few years the NCYS mission and vision really started coming together; but this year proved the Strategic Plan to be right on target. We have truly made our mark hitting a bulls-eye with specific areas that are unique to NCYS and respected by our members, the media, the government, corporate America, and the leaders in and around our industry.

NCYS was founded in 1979 by the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association. In 1988 we had 14 members. In 1998 we had 74 members. Today, 2006, we boast 182+ member organizations that represent more than 52-million participants in organized youth sports programs!

Last year I told you that, "since NCYS' inception, the leadership has sought a specific program to put its arms around that would set us apart from all others. We now have THREE! Three phenomenal programs that have gained NCYS a well deserved, valued reputation as the proven leader of the youth-serving industry." The highlight of this year's report is to inform you that our three major programs are solid, growing at a good pace, creating exciting momentum, gaining recognition, and most importantly are valued by our membership.

HERSHEY'S STRIVE AWARDS

STRIVE stands for: Sports Teach Respect, Initiative, Values and Excellence. NCYS' Hershey's STRIVE Award is in its third year. This recognition program honors outstanding individuals from all across the United States in four categories: Local Administrator, National Administrator, Coach and Volunteer of the Year. The award ceremony events are conducted in each award winner's hometown. They are honored in front of their peers, public officials, their community leaders, colleagues, parents and the children who they mentored so well.

This past year's events were as varied as the honorees themselves. They were held on the tennis courts full of children at a park; on a state-of-the-art softball field; at a national meeting; and at a black-tie hall of fame dinner. The quality of these fine dedicated individuals is so awe-inspiring and makes one so proud to be part of such an incredible organization. Each award winner is a remarkable leader, a respected mentor, and has made such a significant positive difference in the lives of children.

Media coverage increases each year with local, regional and national newspapers and magazines, radio, and television praising our STRIVE honorees. This year in particular the U.S. and State Senators and Representatives came out in force with letters of commendation, proclamations, state flags, and passionate congratulatory tributes.

NCYS encourages everyone to send in nominations with testimonials. Notify your affiliates of the STRIVE program. We will supply you with STRIVE postcards to send your members in bulk for them to distribute. Or duplicate our emails to your colleagues. Spread the word! STRIVE is a great program with good publicity for your program and a fun celebration of youth sports.

A most sincere thank you to Hershey's for allowing us this wonderful opportunity to recognize the best of the best as America's hometown heroes!

NCYS CERTIFIED SPORTS ADMINISTRATOR PROGRAM

Youth sports industry executives and managers have really caught on the benefit of NCYS' Certified Sports Administrator program. We know that the rapidly changing sports market is requiring more sophisticated marketing and greater fiscal responsibility from sports organizations. At the same time, sports industry managers do not often have the time, resources, or opportunity to earn an advanced management degree.

Thanks to the generosity and forward-thinking NFL Youth Football Fund, the NCYS hired the internationally renowned The George Washington University to develop and deliver a customized, flexible and affordable educational program that provides management related courses to youth sports executives.

Courses offered are: Marketing Sports Organizations; Sponsorship & Negotiations; Risk Management; Event Management; Fund Sports Organizations; and Management & Leadership of Sports Organizations.

The key to the success of the Certified Sports Administrator (CSA) program is member organizations offering the CSA courses at their national training meetings and

conventions. This is a top-notch education opportunity that broadens the knowledge base and provides for better-trained professionals delivering sports programs.

All six courses are offered online through the NCYS website www.ncys.org. And NCYS and member organizations will continue to offer the CSA's in a traditional setting throughout the year. The online distance learning opportunity has been very popular allowing individuals to take the CSA courses at their own pace at their convenience.

Completion of all six courses earns one the prestigious CSA designation along with a signed and sealed Certificate from The George Washington University and the National Council of Youth Sports!

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND SCREENING PROGRAM

Without exception, NCYS is the industry leader on complete and comprehensive criminal background screening program for youth serving organizations.

Several years ago NCYS began a nationwide movement to protect our children, volunteers and administrators, and organizations from the possible loss of personal or organization assets because of costly litigation. Without it poses a liability risk that literally threatens the future existence of organized youth sports.

At the request of our members, we created the *"NCYS Recommended Guidelines for Volunteer Background Screening in Nonprofit Youth-Serving Organizations"* to assist the youth serving industry with best practices, policies and procedures. Our goal, of course is that these guidelines will evolve into the industry standard. To further that goal, we helped create the National Center for Safety Initiatives (NCSI) in order to provide the very best national background screening service solely dedicated to youth serving organizations.

NCYS has engaged the insurance companies into our child safety program initiative in order to prove our youth serving industry is taking on the responsibility, implementing best practices and properly protecting them against the liability exposure. NCYS is also active on Capitol Hill keeping a pulse on all legislation affecting our initiatives in order to secure the safest possible environment for the children in our care.

The National Center for Safety Initiatives (NCSI) is the only national background screening services specifically dedicated to the protection of children. NCSI is the only licensed company authorized to apply the NCYS Recommended Guidelines to its volunteer screening, focusing its efforts, systems, and expertise directly into seven identified risk factors using multiple vendors to ensure client organizations will meet and exceed due diligence. NCSI is the only company that serves as a resource for NCYS members in terms of criminal background checks, educational training, policies, and other important activities.

The staff and leadership at NCSI are 150% dedicated to this cause with passionate determination as the first-line of defense in the protection of the children under the care of the youth-serving industry. NCYS is profoundly grateful for their unwavering commitment.

PUBLIC POLICY/GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Another mainstay area of work for NCYS is Government Relations. NCYS has become a regular resource in Washington D.C. for the U.S. Senators and House of Representatives, their staffers and the Congressional committees. We are the “go-to” unified voice of youth sports and recognized as such on Capitol Hill.

For many years now, NCYS has carried the advocacy banner on legislative issues supporting athletic fields and recreational facilities, as well as physical education and obesity. NCYS proved itself credible and influential and U.S. Congress responded directing NCYS to participate in the PROTECT Act.

Having gained the respect of the U.S. Congress, we now look forward to advancing public policy by supporting legislation to provide immunity for nonprofit athletic organizations in lawsuits arising from claims of ordinary negligence relating to the adoption of rules for athletic competitions and practices.

We will continue to advocate for immunity for those youth-serving organizations involved in lawsuits who follow the *“NCYS Recommended Guidelines”* and show due diligence. We will continue to work hard to pass legislation that overhauls the way that we register and monitor sex offenders. We will look to our members help in mobilizing a grassroots coalition whenever there is public policy that affects our industry, advances our ethical values and good character, and/or enhances the youth sports experience in America.

Future plans for NCYS call for a CEO Summit in Washington D.C. whereby our executive members will fly-in to our nation’s capitol, we will have a legislative briefing, and schedule appointments for them to meet their members of Congress face-to-face as well as for their Representatives to hear directly from their constituents.

MARKET RESEARCH

The *“NCYS Report on Trends and Participation in Organized Youth Sports”* is a much sought after document. We are well known for producing credible market research. No other entity produces such a publication for the organized youth sports industry. We are hopeful to receive funding in the upcoming year to produce an updated version.

NCYS WEBSITE

The NCYS website continues to be our most valued area of communication, brand marketing, and source of expansion. It is our “face” to the youth sports industry we represent, and our website drives new business to us everyday.

The STRIVE program is completely online, our Certified Sports Administrator program is online, and NCSI is online. The addition of us now accepting credit cards online has served as a convenience and benefit to our members. Membership renewals, conference registrations, distance learning, merchandise, etc. are all available for purchase online.

NCYS receives exceptional feedback on the appearance and the ease to navigate through www.ncys.org. We receive a lot of attention from those searching the Internet for youth sports related information thus broadening and marketing our brand in a positive way!

THE FORECAST

There are five key areas that the Board of Directors identified as priority issues in the newly created NCYS Strategic Plan: *"Vision 2010"* and they are: Identity/Credibility/Visibility; Partnership; Funding; Member Services; and Leadership & Organizational Structure. The complete document is being published and will be sent to the full membership summer 2006.

IN CLOSING

Believe it or not, creating this report is actually one of the most favorite parts of my job because I get to share with you, the youth sports industry leaders, a piece of the excitement and joy that I live with every day. As diversified as we all are, we are unified. It is amazing the difference we make when we pull together our collective brains and move forward as a powerful force for youth and for sport.

A sincere thank you to the NCYS membership. Your incredible dedication to your work is such an inspiration. When the going gets tough, the youth sports industry leaders are JUST getting going!!! At the end of the day, you can have nothing but extreme pride to do what you do for the children and society as a whole.

Thank you to NCYS Board of Directors. They are amazing individuals who lead with a true passion, an open mind and great vision to be certain NCYS best serves the needs of the youth sports industry. And a very special thanks to President Rutledge. Wanda is completely dedicated to the constructive advancement of the NCYS. She, like all the board members, always make themselves available to me even at moments I know they are frantic with their "real" jobs!

Thank you; too, to our generous corporate partners whom we are most appreciative to and without them, we absolutely would not exist. It is this combined commitment of unwavering support that keeps my enthusiasm and passion at its peak motivating me to drive youth sports forward in a positive way.

My expectation is that you will leave Lexington really charged up – more excited about youth sports than ever before. And that you return home so darn proud to be in this industry that you'll want to take advantage of all the opportunities and challenges we have presented and more!

Thank you for all that you do each and every day to make a child's life more fun and more complete. And thank you for this extraordinary opportunity to serve NCYS.



"You are positive, inspired, passionate and zealous to the degree in which you eliminate negative motions from your life.

Engage in 'mountaintop thinking'; stretch forward in deliberation, and then act as if it were impossible to fail."

Sally S. Cunningham