

Executive Director's Report



"A Unified Voice For Youth Sports"

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**Presented to the
NCYS Board of Directors and Membership**

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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.



“Companies that achieve phenomenon status are always looking 2-3 years ahead and planning for change and meeting the challenges.” That is a true statement for the NCYS.

NCYS was founded in 1979 by the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association. In 1988 we had 14 members. In 1998 we had 74 members. Today, June 2007, we boast nearly 200 member organizations that represent more than 52-million participants in organized youth sports programs!

NCYS spent many years seeking to find its niche. The NCYS Board of Directors, known for tackling the tough issues head on, created a Strategic Plan with a passionate vision. Sometimes the essence of strategy is choosing what *not* to do as well as what to do. The past few years have confirmed that keen insight and a well designed plan pays off with rewards of growth and revered accomplishment.

This past year we focused on strengthening and expanding our top three programs that have gained NCYS a well deserved, valued reputation as the proven leader of the youth-serving industry. In addition, we pressed forward adding a couple new and exciting ventures for both our current and future membership. We have created exciting energy and kicked it up a notch growing our brand to new markets and to new levels.

Credibility, integrity and vigilant visibility have remained at the core of everything we do for our members and our industry. NCYS is unique and we pride ourselves on living up to our Strategic Plan as well as being respected by our members, the media, the government, corporate America and the leaders in and around our industry.

HERSHEY'S STRIVE AWARDS

This year marks the fourth year we are presenting NCYS' Hershey's STRIVE Award. The program just keeps getting better and better as the word spreads to hometown heroes all across the country.

STRIVE stands for Sports Teach Respect, Initiative, Values and Excellence. This recognition program honors outstanding individuals from all across the United States in four categories: Local Administrator, National Administrator, Volunteer of the Year and this year we expanded the fourth category to be Coach 'or Official' 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, administrators, colleagues, parents along with the children who they train so well. Each award winner is a remarkable leader, a respected mentor, and has made such a significant positive difference in the lives of children.

This past year's events were as awe-inspiring and as varied as the honorees themselves. The celebrations were held:

- on an ice hockey rink packed full of children and their parents, brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles saluting an extraordinary volunteer leader;
- at a high school gymnasium during the Special Olympics admiring a speed-skating and cycling coach;
- at a convention center honoring a local administrator who has given a lifetime of dedication through many, many sports;
- and at the Disney Sports Complex before thousands of people paying tribute to a humble and most deserving national administrator.

The recognition to these hometown heroes is of course from NCYS and Hershey's Fundraising but also from local Mayors, County Executives, U.S. and State Senators and Representatives, who send letters of commendation, proclamations, state flags, passionate congratulatory tributes and this year there was a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol. Some even proclaim a "Be Kind to 'STRIVE heroes name' Day!" as a special honor.

Media coverage increases each and every year with paper press and electronic press rising to the occasion. Local, regional and national newspapers, magazines, and industry publications, as well as radio and television have generously devoted tons of inktime and airtime praising our deserving STRIVE honorees.

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.

Hershey's has been a fundraising mainstay for generations of youth sports teams and leagues. Hershey's believes that youth sports play a vital role in the development of well rounded youngsters, by helping to teach children the importance of good sportsmanship, the rewards of hard work and practice, and the sweet taste of victory.

A most sincere thank you to Hershey's Fundraising 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 to 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 of the 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.

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.

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

S.P.O.R.T.S. INSTITUTE

We just can't mention our Certified Sports Administrator (CSA) program without quickly boasting about our new partnership with SportsEvents Magazine. For many years now, our NCYS President Rutledge has envisioned the establishment of NCYS local chapters. And for many years, your Executive Director Johnson has visualized NCYS regional meetings. Well, this year it all came together.

SportsEvents Magazine and NCYS had spent a couple years considering the idea of a regional meeting and this year we held the first S.P.O.R.T.S. Institute in Birmingham Alabama. The meeting was presented by SportsEvents and NCYS was a co-sponsor providing most of the education.

S.P.O.R.T.S. stands for Sports Planners & Organizers Regional Training Seminars. This meeting provides straight-forward training from the grassroots level on up. Topics are presented in a high-energy educational environment for attendees to learn how to consistently produce highly successful sports events and exceed the expectation of participants, sponsors and volunteers.

There is one CSA course offered in its entirety at each S.P.O.R.T.S. Institute putting a 'student' on the road to earning their Certified Sports Administrator (CSA) designation. The S.P.O.R.T.S. Institute is a big step in the right direction for NCYS to expand its membership base, increase CSA participation, and spread the word on all our programs and projects easing the way for youth sports managers and administrators.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND SCREENING PROGRAM

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.

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. These guidelines are quickly evolving 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. NCSI was formed in partnership with the National Council of Youth Sports (NCYS) with the goal of significantly increasing the level of safety for our youth.

NCYS 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 also remains 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.

Here's the history in a nutshell...the criminal background screening initiative first began with the youth sports industry taking its concerns to Capitol Hill. Then NCYS was named in the PROTECT Act of 2003. And then... along came The National Center for Safety Initiatives (NCSI)!

NCSI's mission is to serve as a leading resource in an overall effort to eradicate harm to youth in organizations and communities across the globe through increased awareness, the creation of national standards, and the integration of fully-managed background screening programs.

- The programs and services of NCSI directly reduce the incidence of harm to children and protect youth-serving organizations from child predators. Their shared goal is the overall eradication of child abuse and molestation.
- NCSI's background screening programs are recognized as the "Standard of Care" in the youth-serving industry.

NCSI's focus is to offer a ground-breaking approach to background screening that focuses efforts, systems, and expertise on seven identified risk factors to help client organizations meet due diligence.

NCSI...

- was co-founded by the National Council of Youth Sports in 2004.
- is a comprehensive resource for background screening programs using only the best in class providers and processes to ensure the safety of our nation's youth.
- specializes in assisting youth-serving organizations.
- is growing rapidly with clients increasing daily.
- is the only company licensed to implement the NCYS Recommended Guidelines© which are quickly becoming the standard of care in youth-serving organizations.
- has insurance industry support and involvement.
- maintains safe and confidential storage of records.
- is the only organization in the country that truly manages the background screening process for you.

This past year brought new and exciting business developments. The USOC released it's policy requiring background searches on the official Games delegation staff in order to ensure a safe team environment at the Olympic, Paralympic, Pan American and Parapan American Games. To this end, the USOC has declared that the National Center for Safety Initiatives (NCSI) shall conduct all background searches on all official Games delegation staff members. Each National Governing Body (NGB) and Paralympic Sports Organization (PSO) is required to enter into a contract with NCSI so as to allow use of the NCSI website.

The client list is extensive, and while there are many other prominent organizations along with the United States Olympic Committee who have selected NCSI for its background screening services there are few worth mentioning for their distinctiveness: United States Bowling Congress has stepped out with an impressive Registered Volunteer Program, USA Football has made NCSI part of their League Administrator Toolkit and committed \$500,000 towards reducing the cost of full-service background screening through NCSI for any football organization, US Ski & Snowboarding implemented a membership screening program in 2006 and USA Gymnastics has embarked upon a unique program that will results in their entire membership being screened through NCSI.

Important strategic partnerships continue to be formed, including a national partnership with Pop Warner. State soccer programs, including Michigan and Maryland are engaged with NCSI and many townships are responding including Jackson and Marlboro in New Jersey. NCSI is developing its home market in Cleveland, with the Boys & Girls Club of Cleveland and is active with First Tee groups throughout the country and a number of education based organizations including many colleges and universities.

On a personal note, this area of child safety has been my platform since the early eighties when I was a full time community volunteer. From 1984-1988 I was the chairman of public safety, crime prevention and citizenship (child abuse & sexual abuse, missing children) for the General Federation of Women's Clubs--the largest organization of volunteer women in the world.

From 1983-1995, I had a career holding various positions including deputy executive director with the National Association of Police Athletic Leagues (PAL). PAL is a program whereby cops and kids work together to keep kids off the streets and out of trouble.

Over ten years ago I became the executive director the National Council of Youth Sports where I have continued this passion for youth safety programming and determination to have a reliable background screening and honorable safety program in place. I am an untiring advocate for youth issues, for the protection of children, and for eradicating criminal behavior in our organizations as well as society in order to make a positive difference for children of all backgrounds, genders, and economic diversities. And I proudly serve on the NCSI Board of Advisors.

In 2004 the National Task Force on Backgrounding of America – convened by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, and SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics appointed me to serve their task force representing the volunteer sector. I have proudly attended every meeting including being a presenter in Washington D.C. spreading the word on NCYS and NCSI's leadership and good works for the protection and safety of children.

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

NCYS promotes tangible opportunities for member organizations to participate, collaborate, and engage in the legislative process, always seeking to maximize industry representation. NCYS produces legislative lobby days, encouraging members to come to Washington, DC, and visit with their Representatives on serious issues relating to our business. NCYS also encourages member organizations to cultivate relationships with elected officials by hosting events and inviting Representatives to visit their facilities. The success generated by a collaborative industry approach goes a long way in establishing critical long-term communications opportunities to promote amateur sports and business issues in Washington.

Government Relations is a mainstay area of work for the NCYS. We began our public policy advocacy work 10 years ago with the encouragement of the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association who continues to support our works today. At that time, there were two areas that NCYS advocated for: one was Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) including Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR) and Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) and the other was Title IX.

- **Land and Water Conservation Fund**

Outdoor Recreation

Expanding Outdoor Access

Created by an act of Congress in 1964, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has paid for the creation, development and maintenance of more than 40,000 parks and recreation areas. LWCF is one of the most important funding vehicles to preserving and expanding access to outdoor recreation areas -- enabling millions of Americans to enjoy physical activity. From casual participant to extreme adventurer, outdoor recreation is a critical catalyst for healthy living for athletes and enthusiasts of all abilities. Among other things, this legislation preserves the land so it is available for athletic fields and recreational activities. It's our youth sports fields and facilities issue.

- **Title IX**

Sport Opportunities for Women

Providing Equal Opportunities

Title IX is designed to provide equal and effective accommodations for both men and women to participate in collegiate sports. The government needs to promote increased physical activity and participation in sports as a way to reverse the trend towards obesity. NCYS advocates a stronger position to actively solicit and engage student interest in athletics.

NCYS has continued to carry the advocacy banner on legislative issues. We have 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.

And in fact, NCYS proved itself credible and influential when we mobilized our grassroots efforts for the federal government to assist us promoting child safety through criminal backgrounding. The U.S. Congress responded directing NCYS to participate in the PROTECT Act. We also worked hard to pass legislation that overhauls the way that we register and monitor sex offenders.

- **Child Safety**

PROTECT Act of 2003; Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006

Promoting Safety, Protecting Children

The NCYS was named as a participant in the PROTECT Act of 2003 addressing a variety of provisions for children's safety including a pilot program authorizing national criminal history background checks to determine the fitness of volunteers associated with NCYS member organizations and a feasibility study. The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 includes the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act which declares the establishment of a comprehensive national system for the registration of sex offenders to protect the public from sex offenders and offenses against children. It also establishes mandatory minimum sentences for crimes against children. Both are important pieces of legislation to keeping our children safe while in our care, thereby helping to protect our youth programs from costly litigation.

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. And we will also continue to work hard on issues surrounding physical activity.

- **Youth Sports and Family Fitness**

Personal Health Investment Today (PHIT) - H.R. 245

Empowering Americans to Be Active, Healthy, and Fit

Recently introduced by physical activity proponents, the Personal Health Investment Today (PHIT) initiative would encourage increased physical activity by easing the financial burden of being physically active. If passed, PHIT would expand existing pre-tax medical accounts to allow for payment of expenses related to physical activity, sports, recreation, fitness activities and related equipment more affordable for Americans.

PHIT was reintroduced in the new Congress on January 5, 2007. Almost \$1,000,000,000 was invested in these pre-tax accounts in 2004-2005. PHIT will encourage Americans to be physically active and healthy.

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 enhances the youth sports experience in America.

NCYS CEO SUMMIT & LEGISLATIVE FLY-IN

On June 19-21, 2007 the NCYS is bringing together the amateur sports industry leadership to the U.S. Capitol to:

- provide focused discussions of timely subjects,
- be an effective advocate in the legislative process,
- visit with Senators and U.S. Representatives to influence Congressional legislation.

Attendees of the CEO Summit & Legislative Fly-In will hear from distinguished plenary speakers and panelists from the forefront of their fields as well as participate in panel sessions and informal discussion groups.

Whether one is well-versed in government relations or a freshman "working the halls of justice" this meeting will provide a legislative briefing on the issues making everyone comfortable with the talking points. All registrants will have pre-scheduled face-to-face

appointments with their respective members of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives.

Attendees will return home better prepared to communicate the legislative process and convey key industry issues with their respective boards and constituents. Most importantly, the participant's opinions will be shaping the future of amateur sports.

MARKET RESEARCH

Great news! The much anticipated 2007 *"NCYS Report on Trends and Participation in Organized Youth Sports"* is in production! The University of Kentucky Center for Sports Management is assisting us with this project. The same information is being requested as in the previous studies (1997 and 2001) with a couple new forward-looking questions added. The report will show a 10-year comparison on total participation numbers as well as a breakdown by age and gender. The results will provide important data and trends for all NCYS members to use in their planning and projections.

NCYS is well known for producing credible market research and this is a much sought after document. There is absolutely not a week that goes by without numerous inquiries for our research. No other entity produces such a publication by and for the organized amateur youth sports industry. We look forward to this document being completed and published by Fall 2007.

LOCKER 81 FUNDRAISING SOLUTIONS

The NCYS has entered into an agreement with a company owned by NFL football great and Heisman Trophy winner, Tim Brown. This program is in its pilot program stage but we did want you to know what exciting things are forthcoming in 2007-2008!

The focus of the gift card program is to act as the launching pad for the next generation of fundraising in North America. The program is a disposable Discover branded stored value card (Gift Card)—it works like a debit card. The gift card will address a growing trend in the marketplace toward this medium of gift giving. By combining grassroots promotion, scalable technology, celebrity endorsements and lucrative incentives, Fundraising Solutions will deliver a unique fundraising solution for NCYS and its member organizations.

At this time, the launch is expected in the fourth quarter of 2007. Stay tuned for more details in the near future!

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. As a convenience and benefit to our members, we accept credit cards online for the purchase of membership renewals, meetings registrations, CSA's distance learning, publications and merchandise, etc.

NCYS receives a lot of attention from those "googling" the Internet for youth sports related information. Our website is clean, uncomplicated, and easy to travel through. www.ncys.org has broadened our visibility, improved our image, and marketed our brand with a positive appeal.

As with any company's website, building, creating, refreshing and effectively maintaining the site is an ever evolving process. We are serving two markets: driving individuals through our site until they contact us and appealing to the search engines driving more traffic our way. Content is the key to both markets and NCYS receives exceptional feedback on the appearance and the ease to navigate through www.ncys.org.

THE FORECAST

There are five key areas that the Board of Directors identified as priority issues in the NCYS Strategic Plan: "*Vision 2010*" and they are: Identity/Credibility/Visibility; Partnership; Funding; Member Services; and Leadership & Organizational Structure. This is a living document that we follow on a daily basis. It will be published and available in its entirety on the NCYS website.

IN CLOSING

I have a confession to make, every year I dread putting my deskwork on hold to stop and write this Executive Director's report. But once I get started there seems to be no stopping me and believe it or not the arduous task actually becomes one of the most favorite parts of my job! It is such an honor to be able to share with you, the youth sports industry leaders, a piece of the excitement and joy that I live with and cherish each and every day.

We are not a cookie-cutter industry. We are diversified in sport, in skill, in performance, in rules, and so on. But philosophically we are at one with the common purpose – to enhance the youth sports experience in America for the betterment of youth, of sport and of society.

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

Thank you to NCYS Board of Directors. They are remarkable 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 positive and practical advancement of the NCYS. She, like all the board members are outrageously busy with their own jobs but always make themselves available to assist with NCYS.

And thank you to our generous corporate partners whom we are most appreciative to. 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 an optimistic and constructive way.

My expectation is that you will leave Washington D.C. 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! This CEO Summit & Legislative Fly-In is planned to be an event that is first class, unequalled, unparalleled, unrivaled, unmatched, amazing, stimulating, provocative and inspiring! Hopefully it will even exceed your expectations!

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. Johnson

