As a kid I always wanted to be a part of a team but there were no leagues or programs in my Atlanta neighborhood. The kids on my street played outside all day, basketball was our favorite, we played on the street, dodging cars until the streetlights came on. When I was entering the 5th grade my family moved to a community with more sport opportunities. I began to play AAU travel basketball, and play for my school team. Many of the things I learned early in sport are essential to my life--how to organize and prioritize my time, to make healthy choices, to be a leader, have confidence in my decisions, to work hard and work towards a goal with others. While working with the kids in Olneyville this summer I saw a lot of myself in them, the joy of learning basketball and being part of a team. Sport has taken me further than I could have ever imagined as a kid, from dodging cars to play pick-up basketball to playing for a Division 1 program. I know firsthand the potentially life changing force of neighborhood sport and want to be a part of making that force available to children in Providence. Dominique Leonides ’21

The single greatest determinant of children's participation in sport is family income. Children in families that make over $100,000 are twice as likely to play sports as children living in families that make less than $20,000 (68% vs. 35%). And by so many measures, playing youth sport is important to children’s health and development. Research consistently shows that engagement in sport enhances children’s intellectual, affective and civic development, and increases their sense of agency over their bodies. The Global Sport Community Fellows program believes that healthy, active children contribute to healthy, active neighborhoods—and universities can be powerful partners in growing and sustaining sport opportunities for local communities.

Dominique, a first year student-athlete at Brown University, was one of ten athletes working this summer with community partners to build sustainable sport opportunities for children. Dominique and the other Community Sport Fellows not only experienced the ways in which sport can engage and enrich communities but they explored how their academic interests can combine with their athletic skills to build capacity with local community organizations. The six community partners generously shared their time, knowledge and experience helping the Fellows to come away from the experience with a deeper understanding of the tremendous assets in communities and the ways in which universities can brings much needed resources and human capital to community partners.

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1 Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) data provided to the Aspen Institute, based on 2013 statistics.
A Children’s Health Crisis

Play is a fundamental human right but differences in school and community resources often translate to significant disparities in access to sports and the related, positive health outcomes. Children in Providence neighborhoods want the same opportunities children in more affluent suburbs are afforded, safe places to play and access to a range of sports. Brown University is uniquely positioned to enhance the capacity of community organizations to deliver and sustain sport opportunities for local children. By connecting academic and athletic programming Brown is also in the position of translating research and facilitating new community-research partnership. The intersection of university assets, strong community partnerships and committed student athletes can address some of Providence’s most pressing public health needs and provide kids with opportunities to reap the joy and the benefits of play and sport.

Given the opportunity to access and play sport, many Providence children would be successful. And it's important we support access to many different sports for all children as participating in a number of sports throughout childhood leads to less social isolation, better performance in sport and school, and more lifelong enjoyment in sport. Children in Providence have the desire, skills, talents and strengths to master a variety of sports and develop a life-long love of sport. But children aren't seeking mastery, they play because it's fun. A study of children's motives found that 9 of 10 kids say 'fun' is the main reason they participate in youth sports. When asked to expand on why they participate in sport, children in the study offered:

- The experience of trying your best
- Having a coach treat them with respect
- Getting playing time
- Playing well together as a team
- Getting along with teammates
- Exercising and being active

Understanding why kids in Providence participate or chose not to participate in sport can help us identify the types of partnerships we believe can lead to positive social, emotional, civic and health outcomes.

The lack of access to sport for Providence children is also a contributing factor in health disparities. 39% of children living in Providence are obese, giving Providence the distinction of having the highest concentration of obese children in the nation. Obese children are likely to become obese adults at risk for diabetes, heart disease, cancer, stroke, mobility and mental health concerns. The largest contributing factor to obesity is inactivity, which is a result of:

- A reduction in school-based recess, physical education and after-school sport
- Prioritizing passive play (computers video games, and social media
- Decreased opportunities for extracurricular activities
- Lack of access to safe spaces (parks, recreation centers, sidewalk

Children who participate in sports are significantly more likely to engage in healthy behaviors like eating breakfast and sleeping seven or more hours a night compared to their inactive peers. As exercise improves, attention, memory, reasoning and problem solving skills children engaged in sport tend to perform better in the classroom:

- Children attending schools that offer regular, vigorous physical activity perform markedly better on standardized tests.
- Participation in sport is strongly correlated with academic achievement, civic engagement, family health and a greater overall quality of life.

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4 Ibid
Organized sport provides children with social support, leading to self-esteem and self-efficacy. Students who participate in sport were more likely to aspire to go to college.\textsuperscript{10}

Participating in youth sport also has a number of related health benefits. All of these benefits increase for students who play two or more sports.\textsuperscript{11}

- Children living below the federal poverty line are less likely to be enrolled in preschool, more likely to attend schools that lack resources, and have fewer opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities.\textsuperscript{12}
- Children living in under resourced communities are more likely to suffer from asthma, lead poisoning, food insecurity, depression, and obesity.
- 79\% of children in households with incomes less than $50,000 have almost no swimming ability.

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid
The Civic Capacity of Sport

What many students don’t realize is that researchers encounter more failure than success. I believe I was better able to handle the failures and challenges of research because of basketball. As an athlete I encountered many types of ‘pressure situations’ some that ended in failure. The only way that I could continue playing and improving was to get over the failure, quickly, and come up with a different approach. So I guess I could say that sport has instilled in me a combination of persistence and creativity - and the ability to access these skills when I am frustrated or uncertain. Nelly Weledji

Through sport, student-athletes hone important cognitive skills like observation and description, the classification, synthesis and interpretation of data as well as translating information to diverse audiences. In an athletic context these thinking skills are essential for mastering a complex defense, assessing an opponent’s game plan or mastering a technical skill. These skills are often developed sequentially, one building upon the other and demonstrated over and over again in practices and games with feedback from coaches and teammates. Perhaps most importantly, these ‘feedback loops’ often occur under stressful situations that require student-athletes to take initiative, exercise creativity, and assume responsibility for how their decisions and actions affect an outcome. When they succeed athletes increase their self-confidence and when they fail they learn from the feedback and revise. These feedback loops help athletes learn to tolerate frustration and failure. This tolerance for failure combined with the development of complex thinking skills can make student-athletes adept researchers, engaged scholars, and informed citizens. The ability to tolerate frustration and work in concert with others toward a larger goal is a characteristic of good athletes and good citizens. But perhaps the most compelling argument for developing relationships with student-athletes and athletic departments is that community partners want sport programs and athletes are great ambassadors for the ways sport can be employed to serve local, national and global communities.
The Global Sport Community Fellows Summer Program

Beginning in the summer of 2018, the Swearer Center launched the Global Sport Community Fellows program, a dynamic summer fellowship for Brown student-athletes, grounded in a commitment to:

- Strengthening the capacity of local community organizations to deliver and sustain organized sport opportunities for local youth;
- Building and sustaining a community of Brown student-athletes engaged in sport development work; and
- Strengthening partnerships between the Swearer Center, the Brown Athletic Department, academic departments, and local community organizations.

Ten Brown student-athletes worked with seven community partners in six Providence neighborhoods. Under the auspices of community-based organizations, the Community Sport Fellows coached children from six to twelve years of age. Most kids in the programs responded enthusiastically to the sports offered but were particularly excited about new sport offerings—lacrosse, rugby, and water polo.

In addition to having fun, the kids in the program received sixty minutes each day of vigorous exercise, developed new skills, developed the cooperative skills necessary to play team sports, and appeared to gain confidence and interest in sport.

In addition to their work in the community, the Fellows participated in a weekly seminar examining research on youth sport and neighborhood development. Their research, the process of building and running sport programs, and ongoing interactions with kids and community partners taught us a great deal about the state of play and sport in Providence neighborhoods and the importance of investing in community-based sport. Throughout the Fellowship, the students discovered challenges and opportunities for engaging kids in organized sport:

- Limited space and resources
- Limited sport offerings in the community
- A lack of qualified coaches and lifeguards
- Misunderstandings about the value of sport for all children and lack of accurate information about youth sports overall.

Many college student-athletes are skilled youth coaches who can combine their academic and sport training to create business plans for no-pay neighborhood leagues, provide training for community coaches and referees, and develop innovative and inclusive models for youth sport. Community partner organizations are resilient and offer long-term, sustainable homes for increased sport programming. We are working with several community partners and university colleagues to grow and sustain organized sport throughout the school year. The Fellows and community partners are informing many of the next steps we will take to build a local and national model for engaging student athletes in local communities.

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The kids loved the ‘game with a stick’ and wanted to learn how to do the tricks we often used to get their attention, but over time they began to focus on how to catch, throw, and scoop the ball. Matthew McShea
Building and Sustaining Community Sport

College athletic programs have access to highly skilled coaches and athletes who care deeply about growing their sport in diverse local communities with community-based partners.

Being an athlete carries a powerful sense of self and community. Athletes tend to demonstrate positive civic dispositions like an appreciation for diversity, equity, justice, duty and loyalty. Engaging student-athletes and athletic departments can provide communities with desired sport programs and athletes opportunities to be ambassadors for the ways sport can serve local, national and global communities. Sport can also enhance the academic enterprise by serving as a lens for research in a wide-range of academic disciplines allowing student-athletes new ways to engage with departments and faculty.

Faculty and coaches are critical allies in this work. When we engage coaches we engage their extensive networks and can better identify student athletes who are candidates for community engaged sport work. As Fellows, these student-athletes are integrated into the Swearer Center and receive ongoing training and support to assist them in participating in meaningful community engagement.

As we move forward we are adapting the model to best serve the needs of our community partners, student athletes and campus colleagues. In 2018-2019 we will:

- Work with the Providence Afterschool Alliance (PASA) and the Boys and Girls Clubs to offer after-school sport to middle schools throughout the school year.
- Partner with the women’s swim team and the Boys and Girls Club to teach over 100 children a year to swim.
- Explore the development of ongoing community coaching and refereeing clinics to build neighborhood capacity.
- Expose communities to different sports by offering sport clinics at neighborhood fairs, block parties and special events.

In Providence like in many urban areas sport identifies and unites neighborhoods. Sport is a source of pride but can also exclude kids. Global Sport believes that every child is an athlete; that all kids can and should participate in sport. In an effort to sustain sport we work with community leaders to:

- Diversify sport options and support neighborhood leagues.
- Impress upon policy makers the importance of movement throughout the school day.
- Promote and model active lifestyles.
- Assess spaces for play and sport.

Sport has the power to change the world…it has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does.
The West End Community Center (WECC) serves the Providence communities of the West End, Elmwood, and Upper and Lower Southside, the most ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse neighborhoods in the city. The WECC provides social service and youth programming for families including before and after school care for children ages 5-14 and full day services during school breaks and summer vacations. WECC is a critical support to children and families in the West End providing daily meals, a food pantry, furniture bank, assistance in applying for the SNAP Program, medical assistance, and housing.

The staff and families at WECC welcomed Brown student coaches and allowed the students insight into the role of WECC in the community. The student coaches had an opportunity to interact daily with kids and families and understand the critical role community centers like WECC provide to under resourced communities. The summer rugby and lacrosse programs grew from a handful of curious kids to a field full of kids of all ages playing the ‘game with the stick’ and the ‘over inflated football.’

How did you invent lacrosse?

“When we first started at the West End we found a lack of enthusiasm for lacrosse. The adults and kids at the West End Community Center had never heard of the game, so we found ourselves standing at a community dinner at the West End Community Center in our gaudiest lacrosse shirts, "guys!, we shouted over the noise, "lacrosse is a mix of basketball, football, and soccer, if you like those, you’ll love lacrosse!" By the second week we saw our numbers growing; on any given day we could see up to 35 kids grabbing the sticks and race after the weighted tennis balls we used to teach basic skills.

The kids loved the ‘game with a stick’ and wanted to learn how to do the tricks we often used, over time they began to focus on how to catch, throw, and scoop the ball. It was great to see their progress and a handful of kids developed a real knack for the sport. We plan to work with the Providence Afterschool Alliance (PASA) to introduce lacrosse in after school programming. We’ll offer a co-ed version of lacrosse, building skills and interest with kids and coordinating with other community actors. Matthew McShea ’21, Hafsa Moinuddin ’19

New Kid on the Block

“Oh cool, football! Wait... those aren’t footballs?” It didn’t come as a surprise to us that we had explain to the kids that the ball bag we had contained rugby balls, not over-inflated footballs... very few adults or kids knew much about rugby. Providence has no youth rugby programs, and the adult programs play in areas far outside the city, so we were excited about the chance to introduce kids to rugby.

In our first two weeks, we coached 2 groups of kids, ranging in ages from 5 to 11 years old. We didn’t expect to have 5-6 year olds but then again, there were plenty of things that happened we didn’t expect. We used fast-paced games that kept the kids moving and engaged. Our organized and detailed curricula didn’t quite fit the energetic and chaotic conditions. But rugby is a creative game and the kids needed space to be creative. Our
numbers grew and we were able to teach the kids ‘rugby skills’. Simple ball-handling games and relay races before progressing to competitive, flag rugby games. A number of players showed a real interest in rugby, Maritha, a 7 year old girl, stood out with a knack for contact sports. Her first question every morning was, ‘Are we playing rugby today?’ Maritha was small but charged into drills, and demanded the ball. She had no fear of the older, bigger kids, and anytime a loose ball was in contention you could bet she was going to come up with it. When some older boys asked how to throw a spiral pass, she stepped right in and whipped a perfect spiral. Maritha blew our minds during evasive running drills. Her footwork was outstanding! She was a natural and her daily progress was such a payoff for the coaches. We wanted kids to fall in love with rugby, but we really want them to have access - a chance to play rugby in their own neighborhood. I felt really inspired by Maritha, seeing her take to the game reminded me of how I first felt playing rugby. It will take time and a lot of work but we need to make sure that kids like Maritha can play a variety of sports. Oksana Goretaya '18, Bradyn Jasper GS

D'Abate Elementary Summer Camp: Olneyville

Located in the heart of Olneyville, D’Abate Elementary School is one of the Swearer Center’s oldest community partnerships and one of the few ‘university-community schools’ partnerships in the country. Each year scores of Brown students help provide tutoring, after-school and summer programming to the students at D’Abate. The school serves one of the most ethnically and racially diverse neighborhoods in Providence. This summer Brown student coaches introduced kids enrolled in the summer program to field hockey and basketball. In addition to the fun of helping kids succeed in the sport, the student coaches were able to examine the benefits of school-based sport programming for kids and families in Olneyville.

Where can I get one of these sticks? Do they have them with a blue with flames?

We chose to locate field hockey at D’Abate because of a strong Brown connection but also because we thought the kids would have no preconceived ideas about the sport. I was a little uneasy introducing field hockey. I was entering a community unfamiliar to me to introduce a sport that was unfamiliar to them. Would the kids be open to learning field hockey? Would I have the ability to teach young kids in an engaging way? And, could field hockey have a future in Olneyville?

The introduction seemed to go well, under 90 degree temperatures the kids didn’t hesitate to grab a stick and join into the drills and games. The daily attendance was strong and some kids really enjoyed the game. The two students who were the most enthusiastic were boys, both wanted to continue playing (and they really wanted a stick with blue flames). It was tough to end the program, the kids were disappointed and asked can’t we stay at field hockey all day? Why does today have to be our last day? Growing field hockey in Olneyville will be difficult, but we may have an opportunity with the Joslin recreation center and supportive community members like Mr. Abehouse, a legend at D’Abate and in the Olneyville community. With those footholds and the support of the Brown field hockey team we will try and promote field hockey in the fall through demonstrations and clinics and then expand upon that with a spring in house league. Katie Hammaker '19

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Providence Sport and Leadership: Elmwood

Providence Sport and Leadership (PSL) is a local, non-profit baseball program that operates in the Elmwood and Davis Park neighborhoods of Providence. Founded by Bill Flaherty and Kennedy Arias, PSL uses baseball to engage Providence youth in leadership, academic support, and athletics. Each year provides over 80 young men between the ages of 13 and 18 with the opportunity to play competitive baseball.

Brown student-coach and varsity baseball player Pat Petteruti, a former PSL player offers: "Programs like PSL are about so much more than baseball, they offer kids an opportunity to work hard, work in teams and succeed. Programs like PSL provide opportunity but they also provide a safety net for kids.”

I first heard about PSL during my sophomore year at Moses Brown. It was my first varsity baseball appearance and we were playing against Central High School. The Central Players hit me around pretty good, and I was feeling pretty depressed. One of the Central players came up to me after the game to compliment me, and said, "You should come play for our summer team." PSL was looking for pitchers, so they asked me to join. That summer was a blast. We traveled around New England playing in tournaments and in our free time spent time just hanging out. Spending that much time with my teammates I began to understand the challenges they faced every day - some lacked regular access to hot water, and adequate food, many were from families who went back and forth to the DR resulting in interruptions in their school year. Some of my friends and teammates read at grade levels far below their age. As I was applying to colleges and thinking about my options it was tough to consider the limited options they faced. I realized that programs like PSL are about so much more than baseball, they offer kids an opportunity to work hard, work in teams and succeed. Programs like PSL provide opportunity but they also provide a safety net for kids. *Patrick Petteruti ‘21*

Foxpoint Boys and Girls Club

The oldest continually operating Boys & Girls Club in the country, the Fox Point Boys and Girls Club has served families in the neighborhood for 150 years. The Fox Point Boys and Girls Club is also home to the Fox Point Senior Center and the Fox Point Community Library. Located blocks from the Brown campus, 82% of the families served by the Boys and Girls Club live below the federal poverty line. The Club provides children with multiple services including access to critical educational opportunities that develop their skills, talents, and passions.

This summer, Brown swimmer Jessica Blake-West introduced children in the program to water polo as a means to teach water safety and swimming. "Every practice I saw kids take risks, push outside of their comfort zone and improve their swimming skills and ball handling skills. Whether playing in the deep-end for 20 minutes, or just swimming across the width of pool without touching the bottom, every day we saw some victory." Jessica Blake-West

This summer I taught Splash Ball at the Fox Point Boys and Girls Club. Splash Ball teaches the fundamentals of Water Polo and gets kids who may be novice swimmer to feel more comfortable in the water and improve their swimming skills. The Fox Point Boys and Girls Clubs serves predominantly black and hispanic families, two groups who are at the greatest risk for drowning.
Accidental drownings are a leading cause of death among African-American youth (13)
64% of Black or African Americans, 45% of Latino, and 40% of White children have almost no swimming ability [14]
79% of children in households with incomes less than $50,000 have almost no swimming ability (14)

Fox Point offers pool time to all kids enrolled in summer program, and swim lessons throughout the year - it is one of the few swim programs in Providence that consistently has lifeguards on duty - but even with these opportunities many of the children I worked with were clearly uncomfortable in the water. Despite their trepidation about the water the kids were clearly excited and motivated to play. It was easy to see why, Splash Ball is fun.

The drowning rates of kids is a public health concern. There are only a few pools accessible to children living in Providence and most of those are understaffed, over crowded and open limited days and hours. The Ocean State needs to make sure that all kids have access to water safety and swimming, universities and non-profits can provide additional support but we need address the large numbers of children and young adults at risk for drowning. Jessica Blake-West '19

Providence Afterschool Alliance Summer Zone

The Providence After School Alliance (PASA) is a public/private venture developed to provide a citywide system of high quality, free, after-school opportunities for the city’s middle school and high school youth. The program launched 2004 and has raised over $24 million from a mix of public and private funders to provide programming for over 14,000 middle and high school students. Students receive free after-school and summer programs 4 days per week, a hot meal, and transportation to and from programs provided by Providence Public School District. The PASA model operate on an ethos of 'positive youth development' which they define as 'engaging the whole person within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive.' Brown student coaches worked with the PASA Summer Zone program. The coaches not only ran an exceptional soccer program but worked with PASA staff to define a partnership to grow and sustain a number of sports throughout the academic year through the PASA AfterZone and Hub programs.

That pass was the highlight of my entire summer!

Studies consistently demonstrate the benefit of sport in the development of young people and after being immersed as coaches in a six week summer program, we concluded that sport is as powerful as the studies have shown. From the first day of camp, it was clear that most of the children were unfamiliar with soccer, and those who were, had rarely played organized soccer. Our goal was to excite those kids who had never played and give all the kids an opportunity to play on a team. Most of the kids were visibly uncomfortable the first couple of days and shy with a ball at their feet. One girl, Ashley, kept her head down and her backpack on throughout the entire first session. She was tentative but determined to keep the soccer ball from drifting too far away from her feet. A couple of days later, we noticed her backpack on the ground near the water bottles and the sandals she wore on the first day replaced with tightly tied sneakers. Though we didn’t hear her voice the first week, we were excited when we came back for week two and heard her say, "Miss?, Are we playing soccer today?" Over the next few weeks Ashley grew as a player and a teammate. By the end of camp Ashley was so confident in her soccer abilities that she was challenging the coaches!

Soccer has become one of the many ‘pay to play’ sports. Kids like Ashley, don’t have access to recreational leagues and are ‘costed out’ of local club and travel teams. We need to develop programming that provides kids with the opportunity to play organized sport at no cost. The benefit to the kids in our summer program was evident after the first week. An opportunity to play organized sport on a regular basis in their own neighborhoods would offer them health benefits but would also provide them a chance to develop confidence in their abilities. Abby Carchio '20, Christine Etzel '19
2018 Summer Sport Fellows

Jessica Blake-West ’20  
Cognitive Neuroscience  
Swimming

Katie Camacho-Oronoa ’18  
Public Health  
Softball

Christine Etzel’19  
Biology  
Soccer

Oksana Goretaya ’18  
Chemical Biology  
Rugby

Abby Carchio ’20  
History  
Soccer

Hafsa Moinuddin ’19  
Public Health/Education  
Lacrosse

Matthew McShea ’21  
Applied Math/Economics  
Lacrosse

Dominique Leonidas’21  
Undecided  
Basketball

Patrick Petteruti’ 21  
Economics  
Baseball

Brady Jasper ‘GS  
Bio-engineering  
Rugby/Football

Macey Barnett ’20  
St Andrews High School  
Lacrosse

2018 Community Partners
D'Abate Elementary School Summer Program, Olneyville
West End Community Center, West End
Boys and Girls Club, Foxpoint and Southside
PASA Summer Zone, Southside, Elmwood
Neutaconakut Rec Center, Silver Lake
Providence Sport and Leadership, Elmwood and Davis Park