“As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself, and one for helping others.” Audrey Hepburn

And perhaps, you realize this before you grow older. Lacrosse youth around the country have embraced the US Lacrosse WallBall Challenge, powered by SNYPER and sponsored by Lax World, to not only count their reps, but make their reps count.

More than 7,500 participants spent the summer improving their lacrosse skills while enriching the lives of others by participating in the challenge. Participants are encouraged to do 10,000 reps with the financial support of sponsors. With more than 2 million reps logged and over $25,000 pledged, the monies raised benefit the US Lacrosse First Stick Program which provides comprehensive support - including putting sticks in kids’ hands - to new programs in under-served communities.

“US Lacrosse understands the passion lacrosse players have for their sport, for their own improvement and for their desire to help pass the game on. The SNYPR app gave us the chance to connect US Lacrosse's mission to grow the game with the most basic way to improve their skills,” said Susie Chase, Vice President of Philanthropy and Partnerships at US Lacrosse.

“It’s been very rewarding to have created innovative technology that inspires players of all ages and abilities to play more, have fun and give back to a great cause,” said Doug Appleton, SNYPER’s CEO and co-founder.

Thirteen year old Brayden Stroh of Portola Valley, Calif., was the first player to cross the threshold of 10,000 reps in the first week of the challenge, doing reps in the dark until 11:30 pm to be the first to reach the milestone. In addition, Brayden collected used sticks to donate to the Oakland (Calif.) Lacrosse Club, a First Stick Program. “I am so proud to be contributing gear to kids who can't afford it,” said Stroh.

Racheal Gertz, 18 years old from Egan, Minn., was the first female participant to reach 10,000 reps. “This really has given me something to work on this summer. I saw it as a way to bring some attention to my region of the country, but also to show girls anywhere that we can compete with the guys,” said Gertz.

Where’s your wall?
The U.S. Women’s National Team took the challenge to England on their recent summer tour, and young players across the country have been diving into the challenge at Lax World and SNYPR tents at summer tournaments around the country. The US Lacrosse staff and U.S. Men’s Under-19 National Team got things started on June 13 with the walls at the new US Lacrosse Headquarters.

Though walls are usually meant to close things out from others, lacrosse players around the country have redefined the wall as an instrument to open lacrosse up for others... using both hands to enrich lives through lacrosse.

For more photos, videos and details about the WallBall Challenge, visit uslacrosse.org/wallball and follow the challenge on social media: #WallBallChallenge
CHAIRMAN’S PERSPECTIVE

The Thrill of Your First Stick

Gordon Cooney, Chairman, US Lacrosse Foundation

Just about everyone who has played lacrosse remembers his or her first stick.

Some took the field for the first time with a traditional wooden stick. Crafted from a single piece of ash or hickory, strung with leather and a catgut sidewall, it had a classic style and felt solid, especially in the men’s game on the receiving end of a check.

Those sticks didn’t look too different from the ones used for centuries before by Native American and their descendants still made a great wooden predecessor, they’ve given rise to magical stickwork and endless customization. A stick remains a deeply personal reflection of a player’s style and relationship to the game.

Across the generations, the thrill of getting your first stick and getting into the game remains the same. Because of the generosity of many who want to share that thrill, US Lacrosse has given nearly 16,000 kids the chance to take the field with their first stick over the past five years. In 2016, the First Stick Program will pass an incredible milestone—helping the 500th team begin play.

First Stick staff and volunteers work closely with local partners to provide equipment, support and coaches training to new and developing teams nationwide. Its goal since it was founded in 2011 has been to expand participation beyond traditional boundaries and inspire kids—in all regions and of all means—to play hard, dream big and act responsibly in lacrosse and in life.

The heart of the First Stick Program is the belief that a child’s first lacrosse stick not only serves as an instrument to play the game, but that playing lacrosse promotes life-enriching values such as confidence, teamwork, sportsmanship and leadership.

Thank you to all who have contributed to the First Stick Program. YOU are instrumental.

DONOR PERSPECTIVE

Our Yorktown (N.Y.) Lacrosse 50th Anniversary event in June was a resounding success! We premiered the film “Yorktown Lacrosse: Living the Dreams” at the high school, gathered 250 alumni for a team members only BBQ at the home of Tim Schurr, and held a gala dinner for 400 with all five of our coaches present. We presented our legendary coach, Jim Turnbull, with the “Turnbull’s First Family of Yorktown Lacrosse” Award and our very generous alumni raised funds well in excess of our costs.

We turned to our founding father, Jim Turnbull, for guidance on what to do with the donations. “Jim told us, “consistent with Yorktown’s philosophy of paying it forward and always remembering where we are from”’ he knew the struggles of starting a new lacrosse program.

It became clear that Port Chester—where Yorktown alumna, Paul Santavicca, teaches, coaches football and will coach lacrosse— was the proper recipient, and US Lacrosse was the proper institution to help establish boys lacrosse in the high school and physical education lacrosse curriculum in the elementary schools. Yorktown Lacrosse considers this donation as one of our biggest “wins”. On behalf of Yorktown Lacrosse, the great men and athletes who have come before us and who will surely follow, we are honored to support the growth of the game at Port Chester. We look forward to their 50th anniversary.

Mitch Lieberman ’77
John Martino ’70
John Ranagan ’71

TEAM USA’S GOLDEN BOYS!

The motto suited the team well. From day one, Coach Nick Myers stressed that they would compete with unwavering character, as fierce competitors with humble hearts.

Down 6-0 early in the 2016 Federation of International Lacrosse Men’s U19 World Championships, the U.S. Men’s Under-19 National Team did not waver when just about everybody else was.

Ryan Conrad capped an incredible comeback rally for Team USA, handling Simon Mathias’ pass from behind the cage in traffic in front of the goal, and burying a shot with eight seconds to play to lift Team USA to a 13-12 victory over Canada in the championship game.

The Men’s U19 World Championship is the eigth consecutive for the U.S. We remain the only nation to win the event since its inception in 1988, improving to 47-2 all time.

Canada scored the first six goals of the game, led 8-2 at the half, 11-8 after three quarters and still had a three-goal lead at 12-9 with just over seven minutes to play before the U.S. mounted its final comeback. Timmy Kelly scored with 7:04 left to cut it to two, Mac O’Keefe scored with 5:36 left to cut it to one and then Jared Bernhardt buried an outside shot to tie with 2:34 remaining.

Austin Henningsen dominated on faceoffs throughout the second half for the U.S., and he won the faceoff after Bernhardt’s goal. Tyler Dunn held the ball for most of the possession for the U.S., even after a stall warning was put on Bernhardt started a drive from the left wing, but was cut off and the U.S. moved the ball behind. Mathias found a cutting Conrad and the University of Virginia sophomore scored the go-ahead goal with eight seconds remaining.

The victory snapped a three-tournament winning streak for Canada in FIL world championship play: the 2014 men’s senior championship, the 2015 women’s U19 championship and the 2015 men’s indoor championship.

The world champion U.S. Men’s U19 National Team trains and plays using best-in-class products provided by Nike (apparel and footwear), STX (equipment), and Cascade (helmets). Nationwide, GreenFields and Sweat X are official sponsors of Team USA.

The U.S. Women’s National Teams competes next in the 2017 FIL Women’s Lacrosse Championships in Guildford, England, on July 13-22, 2017. It costs approximately $150,000 – tryouts, training, traveling, clinics and competition – to field a U.S. National Team every year to compete in international competitions and serve as worldwide inspirational role models and ambassadors.

TEAM USA MEN’S U19 BOX SCORES

July 7 – vs. Canada, W 12-5
July 9 – vs. Australia, W 13-4
July 11 – vs. Iroquois Nationals, W 17-3
July 12 – vs. England, W 19-6
July 14 – Semi-final vs. Australia, W 23-1
July 16 – Championship vs. Canada, W 13-12

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Vice Chairs: Ed Weinstock, Kristin Nols
Secretary: Jeana Smiley
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Kira Muller, Editor, LacrosseMatters

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THANKS TO OUR DONORS
FROM OUR FIRST STICKERS!

Thank you for making the First Stick Program possible. Here are some of their favorite things about their season.

GIGI
Culpeper, VA
Player, Epiphany Catholic School

“I’ve made more friends and gotten better. This team makes me happy. It gives me courage to do better. I have a lot of fun!”

JEFF
Evans, GA
Coach, Evans High School

“This season was made possible by the US Lacrosse Grant. We come from an area where players would not have been able to field a team without this equipment. We had a very successful first year going 7-9 and having 3 players get scholarship opportunities for lacrosse. We also built a brotherhood among players who are now life-long lacrosse fans.”

DOUGLAS
Farmington, ME
Parent, Mt. Blue Area Lacrosse

“My favorite thing about this season is watching my son Garrett get out there and be a part of a team effort! I always wanted to try lacrosse and never had the chance. Now, at least I get to see him play!”

BRETT
West Lafeyette, IN
Coach/Parent, Tippecanoe Lacrosse

“My favorite thing about this season was seeing the guys learn the game - respecting the integrity of the game, developing self-discipline, and improving their skills! The improvement that each player has made has made them feel like an integral part of the team! Thank you so much!”

ARIA
Vista, CA
Player, Panthers Lacrosse Club

“My favorite thing about this season was learning a new sport that I never knew of and instantly wanting to be a part of it for the rest of my life. I love the sport and also the amazing new connections I made with my teammates who were first strangers and now family! Thank you so much!”

HARVEST
Cincinnati, OH
Player, Clark Montessori Girls Lacrosse

“I like that lacrosse takes the stress from the day away, and that I get to play with some of my closest friends. I like that we get the opportunity to play this sport because it’s something new that we all get to learn and progress together. It’s so much fun! Thank you so much!”

RENEE
Oceanside, CA
Player, Panthers Lacrosse

“My favorite thing about this season was getting to learn a new sport and the experiences it brought! This was my first year playing and I really loved learning the different skills and getting to meet lots of different people. Lacrosse has given me so many new and amazing memories that I will take with me forever.”

KYRA
Hazleton, PA
Player, Hazleton Area

“My favorite thing about this season was spending sunny afternoons on the field with my friends. There’s no better feeling than walking out of school on a warm game day, knowing that soon I’ll get to play my heart out. I’m so excited for the opportunity to play.”
PASSION IN SMALL PACKAGES
Olivia Koch of Montgomery, N.J., has such a strong passion for lacrosse that she applied for (and received!) a US Lacrosse Soft-Stick Grant to introduce lacrosse to students at a school she had never seen. Each grant provides 30 gender-neutral plastic lacrosse sticks and soft balls, along with a curriculum guide to help teach the sport.

Olivia reached out to the administration at Christina Seix Academy (N.J.), an independent school for underserved kids in Trenton, to ask if she could begin teaching lacrosse to the students. Rob Connor, head of the school, welcomed her.

Thanks to Olivia’s efforts, first-, second- and third-grade students receive lacrosse instruction twice a week for an hour each. Ninety-eight percent of the students at CSA are African-American or Latino.

By the way, Olivia is just 14 years old and in eighth grade.

“You’d expect to see someone that young for a couple of weeks and then figured that they would disappear,” Connor said. “But she is as consistent as you can be. She has become part of our school community, and the kids love her to death.”

Olivia worked with her parents, Michael and Michele, to complete the US Lacrosse grant application in 2015. After receiving the equipment, she set up drills for the students and faculty at CSA to provide an initial introduction to lacrosse. She has also recruited her two younger sisters, Bella and Lexie, to help with the tutorials.

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Having played the game since age 8, Olivia’s motivation was simply to give back and find a way to expose others to the game she loves. She was inspired after reading Condoleezza Rice’s book, “Extraordinary, Ordinary People: A Memoir of Family.”

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“The kids bring so much energy, it’s really fun to teach them,” said Olivia, who plays on her middle school team and a club team. “This has been a life-changing experience for me.”

THE GOOD ACCOMPLISHED
Every First Stick team is bursting with pride as they take the field for the first time, not necessarily looking at the wins and losses, but at themselves in a new light thanks to a donor who believed lives could be enriched through lacrosse.

Without that belief, a senior on the new Capital (W.Va.) Girls Lacrosse Team, could be just another who has fallen through the cracks. With a parent incarcerated and another struggling, she avoided the pitfalls of her neighborhood to become a self-disciplined good student. Discovered by a college coach very late in the season, her good grades, decent test scores and athleticism expressed through lacrosse have turned her into a Division ll lacrosse athlete for the fall of 2016.

The good accomplished, with more to come.

Twenty-three adventurous players plunged head-first into the Capital Girls Lacrosse Team and had the time of their lives. For many, this was their first experience in a team sport. As with most inner-city schools, expensive equipment and transportation prohibit participation in sports. That wasn’t stopping them... they won a game over an experienced team, averaged seven goals a game, heard encouragement from many players and coaches and experienced life beyond the streets.

Fourteen of those players worked hard to raise their own funds to attend the Syracuse University Women’s Day Camp in West Virginia. Coaches Gary Gait and Regy Thorpe, along with the SU players, could not have been more encouraging and helpful, spending three intense days of teaching the girls the fundamentals of lacrosse, and most importantly, the spirit of lacrosse.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY THROUGH LACROSSE
Though equipment is important, it takes much more than that to turn a First Stick program into a thriving team. The Big Sky Eagles of Missoula, Montana, provide three common keys to success after the two-year First Stick grant period ends.

1. Players recruit other players. “The biggest thing is kids bringing other kids,” says Kristin Stratford, a parent who coordinated the team’s First Stick grant application. Prior to receiving the grant, Big Sky had struggled to fill out their squad. “Just to have a team picture with that many kids is such a fulfilling feeling.”

2. Adults stay involved. For parents like Stratford who’ve invested a lot of themselves into the team, it’s tempting—and understandable—to move on after their children graduate. But, especially for clubs that don’t have direct institutional support, parents and other adults who remain connected to the team are indispensable. “It’s important to be available to help the next set of parents and new players,” Stratford says.

3. Stick together through adversity. Finances and school policies are real challenges for many teams, but personal issues can be equally difficult. In January, teammate Abe Lowder died in an automobile accident. Tragedy can cause teams to fracture, but Big Sky players have pulled together. “Abe was a loving, awesome kid, and our team and families will never forget him,” Stratford says. “The kids all wore their jerseys and sat in a row at the funeral, and they dedicated their season to him.”

Donations play a key role, but it is the building of a lacrosse community, and the commitment of many in different roles, that keeps lacrosse going especially through hardships.

TURNING SCHOOLWORK INTO GOOD WORKS
We love it when we receive letters like this one from high school senior Jack Camp.

Hi,

My name is Jack Camp and I am a senior at Wayne Central High School in Ontario, New York. For a graduation requirement, all seniors have to do a senior project including a research paper, event and a presentation.

For my topic I focused on the benefits of high school sports and for my product I held a lacrosse camp to promote the sport, and the proceeds from that I have decided to donate to the First Stick Program. I have seen some of the great things you have done with this program in Lacrosse Magazine and hope that in some way this benefits at least one child and gives them the same love for the game that I share.

Thank you for all that you do for the game of lacrosse.

Jack Camp
GAME ON

PLEASE JOIN US TO CELEBRATE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

6 p.m. - National Lacrosse Hall of Fame Induction
Grand Lodge of Maryland, Hunt Valley

Advance ticket purchase required, available August 1 at uslacrosse.org/HOF

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Tickets $8; limited capacity; advance purchase recommended.
Available at uslacrosse.org/grandopening

10 a.m. - Field Blessing and Dedication
Women's National Team Blue-White Game

12:45 p.m. - Richard M. Moran National Hall of Fame and Museum Gallery Dedication
Men's National Team Blue-White Game

3:45 p.m. - US Lacrosse 9/11 Memorial Garden Dedication
FDNY vs. NYPD Game

USLACROSSE.ORG/GRANDOPENING