

THE ASPEN IDEA

THE ART OF WAR

WHY DO VETERANS MAKE GREAT ARTISTS?

THE MIDDLE EAST

IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

AFTER FERGUSON

ASPEN STARTS THE DIALOGUE

GIRLS

ASPEN FELLOWS LEAD IN CENTRAL AMERICA



THE ASPEN INSTITUTE





Murthy



Indi Cowie kicking it in the capital.

A SPORTING CHANCE

By Tom Farrey

For too long, sport has existed largely as a subset of the entertainment industry. We all love a good game. We marvel at moments of brilliance by great athletes—those vivid, physical, occasionally breathtaking expressions of the capacity of the human spirit. But the fostering of individual and public health has not been a chief priority of the sport system, from the elite to grassroots levels. Huge investments have been made in community recreation, and every parent wants sport to promote positive health outcomes in their child, but the sport system is largely organized around the principle of identifying the next generation of athlete-entertainers. Today, only four out of ten kids ages six to 12 play team sports on a regular basis.

The health sector, meanwhile, has largely stayed on the sidelines. Many leading nations have a sports ministry or similar body to encourage sport development for the sake of public health. Not the United States: the closest thing we have is the US Olympic Committee, which in 1978 was given an unfunded mandate to coordinate amateur sports activity. Researchers will tell you the best way to kill your grant application with the National Institutes of Health is to include the word “sports” in your proposal. That’s starting to change with the concerns around concussion, but sport activity still can be seen as frivolous.

At the Project Play Summit in Washington, the culmination of two years of work by the Institute’s Sports and Society program, Surgeon General **Vivek Murthy** connected the dots—tying access to sport to the health of the nation. “Sports can be seen as a privilege, or a luxury,” Murthy said in his keynote. “But for me and for many children who grow up in America, sports isn’t just that. It’s a necessity. It can be

a key to better health. It can [provide] a foundation that can lead to better scholastic achievement and more success later in life.” No surgeon general has ever spoken so directly—or personally—about the role of youth sports in promoting health.

The 350 leaders who came to the summit—one of the largest one-day events in the Institute’s history—explored Sports and Society’s 48-page report, “Sport for All, Play for Life: A Playbook to Get Every Kid in the Game,” which offers eight strategies for the eight sectors that touch the lives of children. Murthy called the report “a very powerful roadmap” to get all children in all communities active through sports. Over the next year, the Sports and Society Program will present Project Play at national gatherings of key groups that can catalyze systems change.

But many groups aren’t waiting for us to show up. In fact, between the surgeon general’s talk and the end of the Summit, 17 organizations announced new commitments to action that were specific, meaningful, and coordinated with the strategies in the report. Those organizations included Major League Baseball, the NCAA, US Lacrosse, the US Tennis Association, Nike, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Whistle Sports, the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation, the software firm LeagueApps, and the Joint Commission on Sports Medicine & Science.

The Project Play Summit was the day that sport and health leaders found a common sun to orbit.

Tom Farrey is executive director of the Institute’s Sports and Society Program. He can be reached at tom.farrey@aspeninstitute.org or followed @TomFarrey.

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
PROJECT PLAY
SUMMIT

February 25, 2015 • Washington, DC

THE NATION'S PREMIER GATHERING
 OF LEADERS AT THE INTERSECTION OF
 SPORTS, HEALTH, AND YOUTH



350+ thought leaders and athletes | **40+** breakthrough ideas

17 commitments to action | **8** strategies for **8** sectors

1 Powerful Roadmap for Building Healthier Communities through Sports



Vice Admiral Vivek Murthy, U.S. Surgeon General



Allyson Felix, Olympian, and Mo'ne Davis, Little League World Series Pitcher



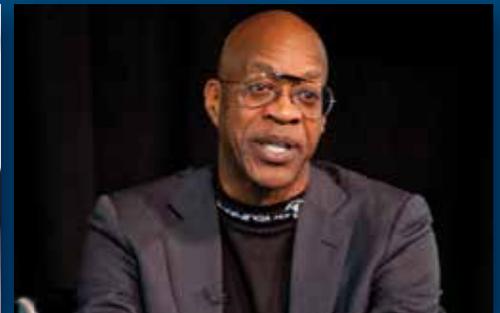
Indi Cowie, Professional Soccer Freestyler



Anthony Robles, Hall of Fame wrestler



Gary Bettman, National Hockey League



Dr. Edwin Moses, Laureus USA and Olympic Legend

Thank you to our partners for helping us reimagine youth sports in America.



Read the Project Play report at www.ProjectPlay.us, follow us @AspenInstSports, and email us at sportsandsociety@aspennst.org.