

## **Lacrosse: A Vehicle for Inspiration**

I have been playing lacrosse every spring and winter since I was in the fourth grade. When I finally grew tired of baseball I knew it was time to branch out and try something different. No more days spent in the hot sun waiting for the eighth kid in the batting lineup to hit another single as I watched, frowning, from left field. Lacrosse was new and exciting, and although, admittedly, I knew nothing about the game going into my first practice, there was no way that it could be worse than baseball. Right from the get-go I knew that I had found something fresh and that I could stick with for a long time. A new love was born.

I went through my elementary and middle school years playing and competing for the town travel league, loving every second of it. I always did my best in both the game and to be an amazing teammate, making sure to always have my own team's back and offering my advice whenever needed. One of the greatest revelations I've had in my life is that I enjoy leading and helping others to have a good day, week, or even longer amount of time. This passion for helping others and being one that those around me can look up to came about through playing both lacrosse and football. The more I played of each sport, the more I understood the value of being there for others and leaving a lasting, positive influence on them.

In the summer heading into my junior year, I was invited by my high school lacrosse coach to help him out with a summer camp for a huge group of youth players. At this point I had experienced a lot of community service on my own and through the high school football team

team, and so I jumped at the opportunity to help out the kids who were the future of the sport I loved in the town I grew up in.

The camps and the drills themselves were easy enough, for around three hours every day over the course of a hot June week we were instructed on how to teach the kids the basics of lacrosse again or teach them new things they hadn't yet perfected. The instructing was fun and, at least to me, there is nothing better than getting to run around and have fun in the nice weather, but the one thing I do not believe could be recreated was the feeling of getting to change a child's whole perspective on what it means to be a teammate and to compete. The age of the kids attending ranged from first grade to eighth grade, and every different age offered their own laughs and smiles. I still remember this little blonde-haired boy named Vincenzo running up to me and asking if his shot form was coming along well. This struck me because instead of just going through the motions and being at the camp for no reason, he was (as a second grader) actively trying to improve his game. There was much and more of this idea of self-improvement present at the camp, and that in itself was inspiring. The best part, however, of the entire process was that day after day (in both the years I participated in the camp) the kids kept on coming back to the event to learn and become better friends with those they play with. The camp was most certainly one of the best forms of service I have ever given to my community. Getting to see lacrosse, the sport that I love, bring a whole bunch of talented kids together while simultaneously putting a smile on their face was truly inspiring and something that I will be repeating again after my graduation this year.