



# ANNUAL REPORT

*June 2023-May 2024*



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# A Note from Our CEO



*Dear AFH Friends, Supporters and Partners,*

*As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the incredible strides Athletes for Hope has made. Our mission to educate, inspire, and empower athletes to make a positive impact has never been more critical, and this year, we've witnessed extraordinary moments that underscore the power of sports to drive meaningful change.*

This year past year, we launched our CHAMPS program, empowering youth with the tools to foster their mental health, grow their leadership skills and stay physically active. The impact is already significant, and we're excited for its future growth. We've also deepened our commitment to mental health, providing vital resources and fostering open conversations to support our athletes' well-being. Additionally, our growing fundraising efforts, highlighted by a successful annual Play for Good Gala, have energized our mission and set the stage for greater impact in the coming years. And that's just the beginning.

None of our work would be possible without the unwavering support of our donors, partners, board members and of course, the athletes we work with every day. Your belief in and commitment to our mission fuels our work and expands our reach.

As we look to the future, we remain committed to our vision of a world where every athlete can harness the power of their platform to create positive change. Together, we will continue to inspire hope, ignite passion, and, most importantly, make a lasting difference in the communities we serve.

Thank you for standing with us and believing in the power of athletes to change the world.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Jason Belinkie". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Jason Belinkie**  
CEO, Athletes for Hope

# Mission & Vision

## Mission

AFH is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit that aims to educate, encourage, and assist athletes in their efforts to engage with community and charitable causes, to increase public awareness of and support for those efforts, and to inspire others to do the same.

AFH empowers professional, Olympic, Paralympic and collegiate athletes to channel their energy for a common goal: to make the world a better place.

## Vision

The athletic spirit is a powerful thing. Whether they're professional or amateur, young or old, all athletes have an innate desire to push the limits. They strive to achieve their full potential, elevate their sport and inspire others.

Along with our Founders and Athlete Leadership Council, we are breaking down barriers and bringing people together. Through our work, we see a world where all athletes recognize their untapped potential to make a positive impact on the world and follow through by giving their time and energy to supporting the causes they care about.



**Athletes for Hope has taught me that there are many ways in which I can use my platform as an athlete to positively impact my community.**

– Kennedy Jones  
Howard Women's Soccer



# Athlete Leadership Council

In January 2024, AFH announced the launch of our Athlete Leadership Council (ALC), spearheaded by esteemed athletes Stephen Curry, Katie Ledecy, Nathan Chen and Elena Delle Donne. These first four ALC members are committed to continuing the legacy of our [Founding Athletes](#) and inspiring the next generation of sports leaders.

The Athlete Leadership Council will focus on collaborative efforts and inspiring the next generation of athletes to address social issues, support charitable causes, and positively engage with communities globally. AFH remains committed to creating a world where athletes can contribute meaningfully to society beyond their athletic achievements, with a focus on athlete volunteerism and addressing physical health and mental health in communities all over the world.



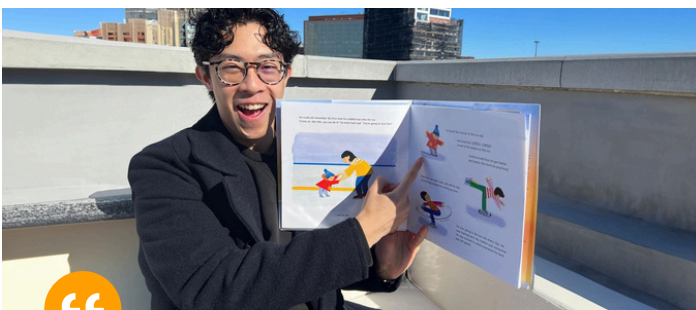
**It means so much to be able to continue the legacy of AFH Founding Athletes like Muhammad Ali, Mia Hamm, Andre Agassi, Alonzo Mourning and others who joined forces to create Athletes for Hope.**

- Stephen Curry



**Together, we hope to lead and inspire the next generation of athletes from all levels and backgrounds to make a positive impact on their communities all over the world.**

- Katie Ledecy



**Athletes for Hope is all about supporting athletes in their journey to help others and we truly believe in the ability we all have to make a difference.**

- Nathan Chen



**Together, we're not just athletes; we're advocates for change, using our platforms to uplift communities and inspire positive action. I'm honored to contribute to this incredible team, committed to helping athletes of all levels make a positive impact on the world.**

- Elena Delle Donne

[Learn more about the ALC Members](#)



# Impact Scorecard

Whether they participated in AFH programming, a Causeway connection or a social media campaign, AFH Athletes went above and beyond over the past year. See their impact by the numbers in our Impact Scorecard below.



**7 per day**

AFH-coordinated community service & advocacy opportunities for athletes



**200,000+**

Children positively impacted by AFH programming on a monthly basis



**833**

Athletes educated through AFH workshops



**1,660,804**

Reach Across Digital Platforms

## Revenue

(2023)



**91%**

of AFH Funding goes directly to AFH Programs

### Total Revenue

\$1,783,500

- Individuals - \$1,145,500
- Foundations - \$268,000
- Corporations - \$180,000
- Government - \$190,000



# Highlights from the Year

## Educating and Engaging Athletes

*Beyond our programs, AFH engages with teams, leagues and governing bodies to help athletes of all levels learn how to use their platform for good and then connects them to opportunities to give back. Check out these highlights from the past year!*

### USA Bobsled/Skeleton Community Service Day

In June 2023, we hosted a community service day in Charlotte, NC with the [United States' official Bobsled/Skeleton](#) (USABS) team and coaches. The day started off with an [Empowerment Workshop](#) where the AFH team shared the importance of service and the many ways AFH provides opportunities for athletes to be a part of campaigns, programs, and service opportunities to give back to their communities.



Immediately following the workshop, the team of 45 athletes designed cards with encouraging messages for hospitalized kids and filmed videos discussing the importance of mental health, daily physical activity, and leadership skills before being split into small groups for three service opportunities with Dream on 3, the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Greater Charlotte and the Salvation Army.

Since this service day with USABS, the bobsled/skeleton athletes have become some of our most engaged athletes, participating in CHAMPS, Whole Being Athlete and much more!



**Thank you so much for your partnership in putting together an amazing time! Our Dreamers had so much fun with the USA Bobsled and Skeleton athletes! I hope your athletes will enjoy seeing all the smiles and difference they made!"**

- Elizabeth Lindsey, Co-founder and Executive Director of Dream on 3



## Senior Bowl Workshop Community Service Day

For the eighth consecutive year, AFH facilitated its Empowerment Workshop with the 2024 Senior Bowl players in Mobile, Alabama, inspiring community engagement and social responsibility. This workshop continues to be a catalyst for aspiring NFL stars to recognize their potential to make a positive impact beyond the football field.



**If you're actually working with people in the communities, I think that's where the real impact is because you care about the work that you do.**

- DeWayne Carter,  
Duke University Alum  
& Buffalo Bills Rookie



After a demanding week of practice and NFL meetings, Friday morning of Senior Bowl week is dedicated to community service. The Empowerment Workshop kicks off the day, helping players understand the importance of their roles within their communities.

Through interactive sessions, athletes are empowered to leverage their platforms for the greater good. This year's group showed remarkable dedication and a strong commitment to making a positive impact.

Following the workshop, players put theory into practice with community service activities, including school visits, food distribution, and spending time with sick children.

What sets AFH's Empowerment Workshop apart is its lasting impact. Beyond Community Service Day, we continue to support these athletes, helping them develop and execute community outreach initiatives as they advance in their professional careers.



# Highlights from the Year

## Impactful Partnerships

*We are proud to work with partners that support our mission and work directly with AFH Athletes and our communities, helping them make a lasting positive impact.*

### American Psychiatric Association Foundation and AFH University Baton Rouge

In November 2023, AFH was proud to support the American Psychiatric Association Foundation (APAF) by connecting AFH University athletes from LSU, Southern and community partners to participate in panel discussion about sport and mental health. The event was part of APAF's ongoing Mental Health Care Works campaign that raises awareness around the signs and symptoms of mental health disorders, showcases the efficacy of seeking help, and encourages individuals to start conversations and take action.



**There have always been conversations about mental health. The difference is people were willing to listen.**

- Deja Griffin,  
Southern Soccer



With an audience of physical and mental health care professionals, panelists discussed athlete mental health topics including performance anxiety, coming back after an injury, the impact of social media, burnout, and more. The conversations were authentic and honest, showing the human side of mental health challenges that even the most accomplished athletes face.

The event concluded with Louisiana State Senator Cleo Fields stating that he felt motivated to do more in the mental health space, with a goal of adding additional mental health counselors in Louisiana colleges beyond LSU.

We are proud of our student-athletes who continue to engage in difficult conversations, knowing that their lived experiences as collegiate athletes can help to shape the next generation and we are thankful to our mental health partner, APAF, for giving them a space to share their stories.





## Bowie State Student-Athletes Participate in CIAA Panel hosted by AFH, Deloitte, and Under Armour

In February 2024, AFH University Bowie State student-athletes participated in an in-person panel for Baltimore-area high school students as part of Under Armour's Project Rampart, an ongoing six-year partnership designed to elevate the City Public High School student-athlete experience and improve academic outcomes through the power of sport (repeat paragraph)

The student-athletes visited the Under Armour Headquarters where they participated in a series of panel discussions with Dan Helfrich, Chair and CEO of Deloitte Consulting, in which they discussed a day in the life of a student-athlete with high school students. The panelists provided insight on barriers to access of sport, adjusting to collegiate athletic life, how sports prepare you for professional work life, and more.

The event was a tremendous opportunity for AFH University student-athletes to share advice and lived experiences with the next generation, while bringing together two of AFH's partners, Deloitte and Under Armour.





# **AFH Programs**

Year in Review & Impact






# CHAMPS

This year marked the first full year of our CHAMPS program, following its [launch in October 2023](#). Building on the 10 year foundation of AFH Fit, CHAMPS integrates mental health into the program curriculum, emphasizing the vital connection between physical activity and mental well-being while integrating character-building lessons through the help of AFH Athlete facilitators. By teaching the importance of physical activity, mental resilience and leadership, CHAMPS has made a lasting impact on hundreds of thousands of youth, setting the stage for a healthier, more empowered generation.




## Impact


June 2023-May 2024




**200,000+**  
students served per month




**96%**  
of teachers agree or strongly agree that CHAMPS equips students with tools to better understand and improve their mental health.



**92%**  
of teachers agree or strong agree that CHAMPS increases students' understanding of leadership skills.



**9.2/10**  
rating from partner teachers



**282**  
CHAMPS visits  
(virtual and in-person)

“ Our kids know what all the letters of the word CHAMPS mean. We always reviewed the previous month and asked the kids to give examples. We had a lot of students who wanted to share so it has been a very interactive program for us to build into our PE program. The kids are always excited to guess what sport the new athletes played. We loved to see so many females represented in so many different types of sports, especially football, and I loved when I heard a girl say to a boy in her class, “See girls can play football too”!

- Hammond School, Columbia, South Carolina

# Whole Being Athlete

In the third full year of our mental health program, Whole Being Athlete, we made significant strides in supporting mental health in and out of sports. In October 2023, we proudly launched the [Athlete Mental Health Alliance](#), bringing together experts and advocates to drive meaningful change in the sports community. Almost 200 individuals signed on to formally support our inaugural [Athlete Mental Health Week](#) in May that focused on sharing resources, stories, and tools to promote mental well-being. Additionally, our second annual [Athlete Mental Health Advocacy Day](#) empowered athletes to raise their voices on crucial issues in the athlete mental health space, leading to increased awareness and policy discussions nationwide. We also launched our *Mental Health Team Talks*, a workshop that provides tools for athletes to take care of their personal mental health, find resources and learn techniques for how to best support their teammates. Throughout the year, we also continued our commitment to storytelling in order to de-stigmatize mental health in and out of sports (see more on the following page). As we reflect on these accomplishments, we remain dedicated to fostering a culture where athlete mental health is prioritized and supported.



“ To me, mental health is just as important as physical health. As a football athlete, specifically, we are constantly in environments overrun by toxic masculinity, which heightens the stigma even more. Speaking up, advocating, and having these conversations saves lives.

- Chris Paul, Washington Commanders & Whole Being Athlete Ambassador

## Impact

June 2023-May 2024



**230**

Athletes Engaged in Mental Health Advocacy Work Through Whole Being Athlete



**1,004**

Hours of Mental Health Advocacy, Storytelling, Service and Convening



**4.5/5**

Average participant rating for *Mental Health Team Talks* Workshops

Hear what Athlete Mental Health Advocacy Day attendees had to say about the day!





# Whole Being Athlete



## Well Beings

As part of the Whole Being Athlete program's storytelling pillar, AFH is proud to co-produce a new season of the powerful documentary series [Out of the Dark](#) in collaboration with WETA's (PBS' national station) youth mental health initiative, [Well Beings](#). This season focuses on athlete stories, showcasing athletes from diverse backgrounds as they face the toughest challenges of their lives and discover strength they never knew they had. AFH's involvement highlights the impact athletes have in destigmatizing mental health, using their platforms to move the needle on public awareness. While the full season will premier in late 2024, the first film featuring Whole Being Athlete Ambassador Jaleen Roberts can be viewed on the Well Beings [website](#). Cal Calamia's film, which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival, will be out with the rest of the season.



## Athlete Mental Health Spotlights

Over the past year, we were proud to highlight a variety of mental health spotlights on AFH Athletes. From baseball to swimming to track and field, check them out [here](#).

## Whole Being Athlete Talks

In May 2024, we were thrilled to work alongside members of the Athlete Mental Health Alliance to launch Whole Being Athlete Talks. Hosted by Kaitlyn Lyle and Blake Palmquist, each episode feature candid conversations with athletes and mental health advocates who are dedicated to breaking down the stigma around mental health—both in sports and beyond. The goal? To spark meaningful conversations and create a supportive community where mental health is prioritized and understood. You can listen to Whole Being Athlete Talks [on Spotify](#).



## Mental Health Champions Club

Launched in May 2023, the Mental Health Champions Club (MHCC) is a network intended to build, inspire, and activate a robust community of mental health champions across the U.S. Each week, members receive weekly communications focused on self-care, wellness and kindness. Along with a story, tip, or resource from an AFH Athlete along with a weekly call to action to help break down the stigma of mental health in and out of sports. To learn more about MHCC, [visit our website!](#)

# Hospital Heroes

For years, the Hospital Heroes program has continued to bring inspiration and joy to children and families across the country. Through virtual and in-person visits, our dedicated athletes connected with young patients, offering moments of encouragement and hope during challenging times. We aimed to expand our reach to include more hospitals and health services organizations, by continuing to work with nonprofits such as **Dream on 3**, **Camp Kesem**, and **Special Spectators**. These interactions not only uplifted the spirits of those in care but also empowered our athletes to give back in meaningful ways. As we look ahead, we remain committed to brightening the lives of those who need it most.

“As a parent of a child with an acquired disability, there were so many doors I thought would be so hard for her to enter. Starting over, learning everything again, seemed challenging to say the least. Connecting with Lacey, and having this opportunity, really showed her that it is even more possible than we realized. You gave her hope.

- Parent of a child who visited with Paralympian Lacey Henderson for an adaptive ski day through Hospital Heroes

## Impact

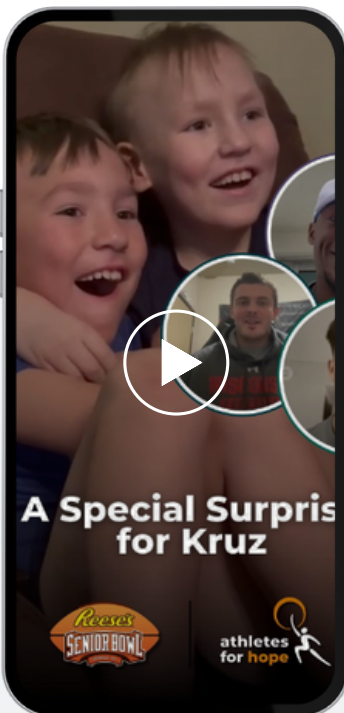
June 2023-May 2024



**130** Hospital Hero Connections



**50** Hospital & Community Partners



## Hospital Heroes Spotlight

In February 2024, Senior Bowl players who attended the AFH Empowerment workshop recorded a special surprise for 7-year-old Kruz, who is battling Leukemia, and his brother Kolton, giving them both a memory that will last a lifetime.

“We watched the video and were in tears! What great guys to take time out for Kruz. Kruz and Kolton were so excited! Those guys probably don't fully grasp what a little time out of their day can do and we are so appreciative.

- Member of Kolton and Kruz's family after receiving a video from Senior Bowl players



# AFH University

This past academic year, AFH University (AFH U) made significant strides in strengthening the bond between student-athletes and their communities. Through increased engagement, AFH U created many more connections between athletes and community partners, expanding opportunities for student-athletes to make a positive impact across various causes. These efforts not only enriched the lives of those served but also fostered a sense of purpose and leadership among the athletes.



**[The AFH University workshop and program] inspired me to be more involved in the Davidson community.**

- Davidson Women's Tennis player

During this academic year, we expanded AFH U team at Davidson College, working with Baseball, Women's Basketball, Women's Tennis, and Women's Lacrosse. Highlights of the year include the 11 workshops across 7 Davidson teams focused on Empowerment 1.0 and Mental Health, the Howard Women's Lacrosse team delivered the CHAMPS program twice a week at DCPCS - Brightwood Campus for a full semester and the launch of our [Mental Health U YouTube series](#). We also deepened our engagement with Southern and LSU student-athletes in Baton Rouge and Bowie State student-athletes in Baltimore. The connections that they made in their community alone has impacted many children and community members who are excited to have them back for a new school year. As we prepare for the school year ahead, we remain committed to empowering student-athletes to be active, engaged citizens both in and out of their sport.





# AFH University

## Impact

June 2023-May 2024



**1,628**

Student-Athletes engaged with AFH University



**55**

Active Teams Across 15 AFH University Campuses



**63**

Community Partners Engaged



**18,790**

Individuals Impacted Through AFH University Service Opportunities



**90.5%**

of Student-Athletes Reported Being More Likely to Give Back After the AFH U Program



**100%**

of Partners Reported That They Would Work with AFH U Student-Athletes Again



**4,385**

Hours of Service



**233**

Community Visits

## Locations

- Bowie State University
- University of California, Los Angeles
- Clark Atlanta University
- Davidson College
- Emory University
- Georgetown University
- Howard University
- Louisiana State University
- Michigan State University
- Morehouse College
- Ohio State University
- University of Southern California
- Southern University
- Tulane University
- University of Virginia



# High School Leadership Academy

Launching the pilot program in January 2024, the AFH High School Leadership Academy brought together athletes from nine different Washington, DC high schools and eight different sports. As part of the program, AFH hosted monthly virtual sessions led by Athletes for Hope staff, professional and Olympic athletes, and local non-profit experts. In-person service opportunities included feeding the homeless, attending **KEEN** Prom with teens with disabilities, organizing sports equipment for Leveling the Playing Field, and participating in **KEEN DC's** Sports Festival.

The pilot program culminated in early summer with a graduation in which each athlete presented their personal action plans, combining lessons learned with their passions to make a community impact. Graduates received certificates and yearbooks and joined the larger AFH network. We look forward to continuing our work with them through local service, mentoring future participants, and inviting them to future AFH events.



## Impact

June 2023-May 2024



**100%**

Agree that HSLA increased their knowledge about identifying their charitable passions.



**92%**

Agree that HSLA increased their knowledge about using their platform to make an impact.



**92%**

Feel more empowered to be a community leader as a result of participating in the program.



**4.8/5**

Overall Program Rating



**My HSLA experience has been amazing. I have met important and impactful leaders and athletes. I even got the chance to ask them questions and get meaningful insight on what it takes to be a strong leader. I am surrounded by other like-minded teens with similar goals and this puts me in an environment that I am proud to be in.**

- Member of AFH HSLA Class of 2024



# AFH Marquee Events

## Play for Good 2023

The [2023 Play for Good Gala](#) was a night of celebration, bringing together athletes, partners, and supporters to honor the power of sports to inspire positive change. The event featured inspiring speeches from our honorees, impactful stories from program participants, and a live auction, all aimed at raising funds to support Athletes for Hope's mission. With over \$500,000 raised, AFH has been able to continue our mission of helping athletes make the world a better place.

This year we were able to honor three remarkable individuals who transcend their professional and sport accomplishments by dedicating their time and resources to making a positive impact in the lives of others.



### Mia Hamm

#### Inaugural Mia Hamm Founders Award

*Trailblazing Soccer Icon, Philanthropist, Commentator, Author & Speaker, AFH Founding Athlete*



### Vernon Davis

#### Community Hero Award

*NFL Legend, Philanthropist, Actor, Musician, Entrepreneur*



### George Cohen

#### Lifetime Hero Award

*Leading Sports Lawyer, Philanthropist, AFH Founding Board Member*



## Event Recap

Revisit the magic that was Play for Good 2023!



## Event Spotlight

Watch what previous AFH Community Hero Award recipients Stephen Curry & Katie Ledecky had to say about Vernon!





# AFH Marquee Events

## Putt for Passion 2024

On Monday, May 20, Athletes for Hope held its **2nd Annual Putt for Passion Golf Tournament** at Kenwood Country Club in Bethesda, MD. Together, we raised over **\$140,000** from the event to support AFH's mental health programming, [Whole Being Athlete](#) and [CHAMPS](#).



The funds raised at this year's event allowed AFH to:

- Help 200,000+ young people from underserved schools develop their mental health skills
- Feature stories and panel conversations to raise awareness about athlete mental health
- Activate hundreds of athletes around mental health advocacy campaigns
- Educate athletes, coaches and communities about unique mental health challenges faced by athletes
- Connect national leaders to create legislative change to support the mental health of athletes at all levels





# AFH Partners and Supporters

Because of our partners, we are able to sustain impactful programming that our AFH Athletes leverage each and every day to give back to communities all over the country. An enormous thank you to every donor and our partners who made everything that's included in this report possible!



To join our support network, please consider making a donation to Athletes for Hope today!

Donate

# Get Involved. Be Inspired.

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**Athletes for Hope**

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