



World Olympians Association awards inaugural Service to Society Grants

Monaco, 3 April 2017

World Olympians Association (WOA) has announced the award of its first six Service to Society grants for sustainable, Olympian-led, community projects and initiatives. The successful projects, from Australia, Colombia, Estonia, India, Malaysia and Zimbabwe, will each receive US\$5,000 towards their running costs, as part of the WOA's strategy to assist Olympians in their efforts to make a difference in their communities.

The aim of the grants programme, which was officially launched in November last year following a call for submissions to National Olympians Associations, is to empower Olympians to deliver projects that align to the promotion of the Olympic Values, Olympic Agenda 2020 and the activities of the Olympic Movement.

Following a thorough evaluation process by the WOA Grants Panel, the successful recipients of the 2017 Service to Society have been chosen. With projects spanning all five continents, they represent a powerful demonstration of the strong desire Olympians have to make a positive and lasting impact in their communities.

The inaugural Service to Society grants have been awarded to:

- Australian Olympians Association
- Colombia Olympic Committee Athletes' Commission and Colombian Olympians Association
- Estonian Olympians Association
- Olympians Association of India
- Malaysian Olympians Association
- Zimbabwe Olympians Association

WOA President, Joël Bouzou, said:

"Olympians have the ability to make a genuine difference in their communities; as leaders and role models they can spread the spirit and practice of Olympism to drive positive change.

“That is the ethos behind the Service to Society grants – by giving Olympians practical assistance we can help them to deliver inspiring projects that foster social development, promote inclusion and help Olympians give back.

“2017 is the first year we have run the Service to Society grants programme but we intend to establish it as an annual fund, ensuring more and more Olympian-led projects can be supported. This year we were grateful for the support of our patron, HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco, who generously donated one of the grants. In years to come we hope to encourage other Olympic alumni to contribute to the fund.”

Details of the 2017 Service to Society funded projects can be found below:

Australian Olympians Association– *Meet with a champ*

Olympians will engage directly with schools in Queensland to promote the Olympic ideals amongst students, sharing their experiences on the positive impact sport has had on their lives to encourage students to follow their dreams and embrace diversity while also promoting the importance of a healthy, active lifestyle.

Colombia Olympic Committee Athletes’ Commission and Colombian Olympians Association (joint initiative) – *Olympians against violence*

Olympians against violence aims to support communities that have been affected by armed conflict, using firsthand experiences with Olympians to teach children how, through the practice of sport, they can overcome social barriers, poverty and violence. Olympians will act as role models to underprivileged children to improve their confidence and foster unity by mobilising communities around sport and the Olympic values.

Estonian Olympians Association – *Olympics for Schools*

The Estonian Olympians Association in conjunction with the Estonian Olympic Academy aims to support the establishment of Olympic education weeks and sports festivals – mini Olympic Games - in schools in Estonia, inspiring children to take part in a variety of sports and providing training and support to teachers who wish to be involved in running the events.

Olympians Association of India – *India SWIMS*

India SWIMS is an Olympian-led water safety education programme that seeks to promote awareness around water safety in India through the distribution of information kits and the delivery of engagement sessions for children throughout the country. Water safety is a huge issue in India and through India SWIMS, the Olympians Association of India hopes to make a difference to communities across the country.

Malaysian Olympians Association – *Lighthouse Children’s Home*

Malaysian Olympians will work with the Lighthouse Children’s Home in Kuala Lumpur to provide access to sport for underprivileged children. The project will see Olympians lead motivational workshops, run tennis, hockey, cricket and badminton programmes, advise on health and nutrition and contribute to the children’s ongoing education.

Zimbabwe Olympians Association – *Olympians Education Fund*

The Zimbabwean Olympians Association wishes to support the career transition and ongoing education of its Olympians after they finish competing by providing access to funds for coaching courses and community projects. The money from the grant will be used to start an Olympian-run, community chicken farm which will provide eggs for the local area, with profits going towards a fund for Olympians to spread the power of Olympism and active lifestyles in their communities.

-ENDS-

About World Olympians Association

WOA is the member organisation for the more than 120,000 Olympians worldwide. Our remit is to work for the benefit of all Olympians at all stages of their lives, empowering them to serve society and help make the world a better place. With 148 member National Olympians Associations (NOAs) spread across all five continents, WOA provides support to Olympian-run events and projects based on the Olympic ideals laid down by the founder of the modern Olympics, Pierre de Coubertin.

For more information

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