

Canadian Inclusion programming in parallel with Vancouver 2010 –

SLIPPING A GEAR –

CAN WE PUT THE BREAKS ON, AND RETHINKING INCLUSION IN CANADIAN SPORT AND POTENTIAL POSITIVE IMPACT.

Are we missing a great opportunity too unite Canadians through inclusion and sport, and bring greater results and resources to the games...

Dear David and ALL,

From the standpoint of ease, I felt easiest to write David directly at Sport Canada, but please note this is a letter to all cc'd in this correspondence for review.

Last evening, on as I traveled along the base of the city of Toronto as I was working my way out of the city on a training ride, I was stopped at a light by a fellow, mid 40's masters cyclist wanting to speak with me. Puffing and huffing, he said, "Are you Kristen". I was set back for a moment, and he continued to say, " Why I ask, I noticed you in your Endurosport cycling gear and I wanted take the opportunity to speak with you if it was you...". Jokingly I replied, "Yes I am, but don't tell anyone...". We had a spirited laugh together.

I learned Garth was a high school teacher, in midtown Toronto, Eglinton and Mount Pleasant, a sociology and Phys'Ed teacher, at a local high school, said to me, "Kristen I want to let you know something. My wife and I read the Globe & Mail article three weeks ago, and were totally taken it. We were totally engaged by it, as it was compelling and for the first time we've ever seen it positioned as so real and human, and most of *NORMAL*."

Continuing to say as we rode along Queens Quay, " I want to let you know, the article touched so many lives, my colleagues as well many of my students. My colleagues and I were so pleased by the article, that we used it that week in many of our school programs to initiate discussion regarding gender and sexuality. And what this did for us at the school administration level, enabled us to talk about it and use as a strong example of success and variances in our society and community that are within us ALL. Where as, if we were to do this through other groups or create discussion out of the blue on gender variance and sexuality, families would be all over us and saying, What are you doing teaching this, and we don't want you teaching our children this etc..."

"Kristen, you opened that door, by putting it in a language we all can understand and makes sense. As well, allowed us to put it into a dialogue enabling to have strong conversation making it real and tangible, that we my colleagues and my students could identify with.

Bringing it into sport, could have not been a better idea, as it relates to most people at some level or another...”.

“I just want to let you know the impact of the article had... You reached many youth, as well many of my professional colleagues.”

As I separated from Garth, Garth asked if he could contact me, thus asking if I could come to their school and come and speak and meet the student body. I said I am very busy right now, but more the happy to if you can coordinate it if I know reasonably soon.

David, I feel this is a very important incident to alert Sport Canada and our Canadian sport community too. I have been contacted by Western University as well other institutions saying how they were so moved by it, and how it impacted the students.

Kinda COOL really!!

But most importantly, as you know taking this on if you can believe (3) years ago, this was always my attention to engage youth and families through sport on these issues right across Canada, and internationally as well. Sport has been that point of engagement, and something I brought to everyone’s attention several years ago, and something that was thrown around re inclusion in sport around 2010, and the value of the games to address many of these issues. Where VANOC members, then suggested, we’d like to show the world by 2010. *We are the most diverse country in the world, setting precedence for the rest of the world to follow.*

In simplicity and arguments sake it is already happening and happening through sport - This continued type of engagement from people coming to me, and as I grow in sport and meet my goals this will continue.

This is very real now, and very possible!!

Are we missing an opportunity that is compelling within Canadian society – Yes without any hesitation and with proof I can say this. I think gone are the days, of the COC sending athletes into schools or businesses and power speaking about their glory and flouting their medals. Then handing out pins, badges and posters with COC and IOC branding. “Raw Raw Raw...!!” What about long-term positive impact on a child’s life instead, instead of promoting for most children intangible goals that are not accessible to most Canadian youth. That is a role model and leadership, that truly comes from sport – It is what an athlete does with it **AFTER** sport, that matters, the gift given by so many people that helped that person meet their personal goals – It is the giving back that matters.

Canadian athletes I choose to know are doing compelling work in Canada and abroad. I think of my very good friend, Olympic rower Silken Laumann, with the youth development program and get kids moving through rowing, but as well here incredible

efforts and work to move government and medical community to address obesity in this country now at an all time as in the United States at 65% of the population are obese.

That's leadership, and that's making a difference through sport...

I know several athletes that are doing other work just like this. Thinking allowed from my personal experience, with what I have been doing, with the help of Mianne and Jamison, and now support from sponsors, who believe in me and what I am doing in and out of sport, and I feel strongly, for the amount of investment into sport, that Sport Canada and private institutions give, what are you getting in return.

VERY LITTLE!! And in most case immeasurable... Feels like an open money pit I am sure it must feel at time like this...

I guarantee you, this can change and is changing particularly in the social demographic based on issues of inclusion in Canadian society. And through these efforts by few illustrates clearly the needs as well changes in the Canadian demographics, and social changes between the Montreal games in 76', the Calgary games in 88' to the Vancouver Games in 2010'. By now, we should have it down, as our country will have hosted 3 major Olympic games events by 2010. Like you, I am watching the same sports strategies, marketing of the games, and calls for financing from the federal and provincial governments as well corporate Canada, to fund 100's of million's of dollars into 16 days of sport from 2 years from now. Being marketed to the Canadian public, infrastructure and future development sites, which potentially market in reality to a very small number of Canadians.

With this type of investment, as until now much of the development focus has been on the province of British Columbia, receiving all the financial infrastructure developments, which obviously makes sense. But *ALL* of Canada is being marketed about the upcoming games through television, internet, newspaper and radio. As well, as coin collection RBC and HBC campaigns, which again have been around forever, as well reach only a very small demographic of Canadians against the investment.

Where and what is missing is the people, and that is community across Canada, as well around the globe. This is what the IOC sells to the world its goodwill, and that the games are about all of us, the *PEOPLE* with all *diverse experiences and unique*.

In these very simple illustrations, exercises so easily very clearly and without any doubt, the potential sport has, the role of the Vancouver 2010 games and beyond, can potentially impact in a very positive and *INCLUSIVE* way, to better the youth and Canadian families lives by focusing on the people.

INCLUSIVE means many things and effects every person in Canada, like it or not. I feel strongly, and using the work Silken or I are doing on our own, or Dr. Janice Forsythe on working on programs for *INCLUSION* in the aboriginal communities and getting women

and youth engaged. There are several person(s) doing this, but what power and strength it would bring to have identifiable relationships with example, Sport Canada, Heritage Canada, COC, VANOC and others – *“programs would fly off the table across this nation...”*

I feel strongly more then ever, there is way more to this and potentially an explosive opportunity to utilize the games in 2010, as well our community of sport to get the word out and show leadership to Canadians to drive these programs and opportunities to unite us as ONE.

This is what VANOC and COC pitched to Canadians as well to the IOC to gain the title ship for the games-

We are in a very unique position, and I am frightened that the next (2) years will slip bye, and we will miss the biggest opportunity to get the best out of the games and what potentially can do for the people and unity of this country, as the most diverse country in the world.

God forbid and dare I say, corporations and governments would be more responsive to invest money in sport, if they new that how much it was benefiting the development and infrastructure of our nation. It is a no brainer, and we have to think outside of the box, and think through the potential of what sport can do other then just winning medals. Many big banks like RBC and BMO invest millions of dollars a year into diverse communities, as well motor companies as an example, customize advertising and marketing towards communities, and vary them as they understand the unique needs and interests of those person(s).

I wanted to mention as well, at nationals this year, “several” gay athletes, thanked me for having the courage to confront sport on these issues, and making their worlds better understood and supported. Most importantly the issues of diversity and inclusion and how important it is for the future of the Canadian as well global sports system. Ensuring youth and families have access to sport. Which intern affects *ALL* of us, and cannot turn a blind eye to it.

You have Canadian athletes past and present, proving that this is possible, and that it is truly limitless the opportunities. Bur it is about *“changing our ways”* and 30 years have gone bye, and much of the marketing and business models the business plan hasn’t changed all that much.

David and *ALL*, I hope I have reached you on this – It would be horrible waste to miss such an opportunity, to do important work, that unites Canadian communities – Sport is one of the few mediums, that can do this and reach such a large population and demographic.

As outlined above, some things are so simple with unbelievable impact and value. It is time to bridge this gap -

With professional regards,

/Kristen Worley

cc'd

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