

Education and Athletics; The Bridge To Racial Equality In America

The world today is constantly changing and very confusing for the youth of America. Our generation is faced with a constant choice between right and wrong, and how to interpret the world around us. One pressing issue in our society is racial inequality that results in a disparity in both education and athletics among minority teens and young adults.

Education in America has long felt the effects of racial inequality. Often, students in low-income communities receive large sums of money from the government without seeing improvements in their test scores and graduation rates. Inherently, the system is flawed causing an educational imbalance between wealthy and low-income communities. While there are significant flaws in the system, there are action plans in place to help. Kid's Alley, a local, ethics-based non-profit organization runs a number of programs to help with these issues including peer mentoring, tutoring, and friendship-building workshops taught by kids their own age with adult supervision. Their goal is to create "A world in which at-risk children have the support and means to mature into thriving adults." By partnering with innovative programs like Kids Alley, students from neighboring towns can work to bridge the gap in educational inequality. If the youth of our community understands how to help combat educational inequality from a young age, our society as a whole can begin to change. This is the best way to make

our educational system fair and create equality for all regardless of a person's financial and racial backgrounds.

Athletics is another area in which minority children do not have the same opportunities as in upper-middle-class communities. Some contributing factors to the disparity are less variety of sports, reduced funding, and less experienced coaching. Many low-income students also don't have access to equipment, personal training, and recruiters that help with college and career planning. The best way to improve this situation is to get teens from different communities together through sporting events and tournaments. To take action against these injustices, our students can start a program in which student-athletes from Haddonfield and neighboring communities work together to create integrated sports teams that promote a team environment based upon friendship, comradery, and communication among all players. The program would include a variety of sports, equal opportunity for all players, and help with academics. Working directly with the communities affected by racial inequality is the best way to promote growth and understanding among people of different races and opportunities.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said "We are not makers of history. We are made by history." In the history of the United States, education and athletic opportunities have impeded the advancement of social reform. Our generation has a chance to move forward with positive change and to right the injustices suffered by minorities in the past. The best way to do this is to work directly with neighboring communities through programs like Kids Alley which have a direct impact on the life of teens and young adults in areas with fewer opportunities in education and athletics. Together, we can make our future fair, just and equal for all.