As the world grapples with COVID-19, everyone is anxious about their health and the health of their loved ones. But for families with immunocompromised children, the anxiety is tenfold, and their traditional supports are dwindling under new restrictions. Programs they once turned to for support—playgroups, occupational and physical therapy, and disease-specific summer camps—have been postponed and canceled, causing anxiety and placing even more pressure on parents. Meanwhile, without their teams, our student athletes who have devoted their lives to their sport are simultaneously experiencing a loss of identity, camaraderie, community, and purpose, and, in some cases, are now struggling with mental health issues. **Today, more than ever, they need each other.** **Today, more than ever, they need our support.**

**COVID-19 Doesn’t Stop Our Program.**

In the months since COVID-19 was discovered, our clinical staff successfully **transitioned the entire program to a virtual model**, and developed new curriculum, trainings and engagement opportunities to keep our kids and teams connected—with or without sports.

**How Our Virtual Program Works**

- Increased 1:1 case management
- Virtual training for families and teams
- Year-long, goal-based curriculum
- Innovative engagement opportunities

In addition, the **virtual model will break down traditional barriers of entry to our program**—such as extended hospital stays, a family’s proximity to a school, transportation and more—allowing us to reach and serve more kids and families in need.

**More on Our Virtual Model >>**
INCREASED 1:1 CASE MANAGEMENT

For the first time ever, each one of our 600 matches is now being managed as a priority, high-acuity case. Our Case Managers, all clinically-trained either as a Certified Child Life Specialist and/or with a Masters in Social Work, have always provided their services remotely, but are working around the clock to meet the intensified needs of our matches.

ENHANCED VIRTUAL TRAINING

Our Case Managers are now training student athletes on how best to support chronically ill kids dealing with social isolation, as well as their own loss of extracurricular activities and school support. These trainings also provide an opportunity for our student athletes to virtually connect and collaborate at college campuses across the country.

YEAR-LONG VIRTUAL CURRICULUM

As the school year begins, we are excited to launch our new virtual curriculum that will have units focused on: sense of belonging, resilience, empowerment, health promotion and socialization. Each unit consists of several activities selected by the Case Manager based on the specific needs of the child and team. The curriculum includes screen based, non-screen based and in-person activities, the implementation of which will depend on state, local and school guidelines.

INNOVATIVE ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As we prepare for a school year unlike any other, our staff has developed new ways to keep our kids and teams connected and engaged, even while apart. An example was our Unstoppable Summer Series, a series of activations and campaigns to helps kids and teams work toward goals, including Spotify Playlist challenges, Summer Sidekick (like Flat Stanley), and a virtual 5K that reached our community in 37 states and 5 countries! Our staff is developing engagement campaigns to carry this excitement throughout the school year.

“Even though I’ve only talked to Lily over Zoom, her energy and spirit for life is undeniable. She puts things in perspective and puts more meaning into our sport. I look forward to making videos and playlists for her, and I can’t wait to meet her in person! Team IMPACT has made this all possible, and I’m looking forward to working more with them and Lily.”

– Grace, UPenn Women’s Lacrosse
VIRTUALLY UNSTOPPABLE.

While things may look different this year, the bonds between kids and teams are unbreakable. Below are just a few examples of how our program looks today.

VIRTUAL DRAFT DAYS

CAR PARADES

MESSAGES FROM TEAMS TO KIDS

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES, LIKE THE VIRTUAL 5K

OUTCOMES

CHILDREN:
Experience a true sense of belonging, resulting in increased empowerment, normalization, health promotion, and resilience.

FAMILIES:
Feel connected and supported as their child achieves individualized goals, while experiencing the joy of team camaraderie and inclusion.

STUDENT ATHLETES:
Gain perspective and inspiration from their courageous teammate, as well as lessons in adversity and resilience.
Unwavering support from donors has made Team IMPACT a leader in the fight to help kids overcome the emotional trauma and social isolation associated with childhood illness. Together, we’re creating an outlet to let kids forget about cancer, cystic fibrosis, and other diagnoses, and just be kids. And today, when children and student athletes are more isolated and anxious than ever, your continued support is needed.

At a time when both childcare programs and routine pediatric and therapeutic care are not readily available, our clinical Case Managers are navigating each child’s unique circumstances to improve the frequency and ease in which they connect to young athletes from the safety of their own homes. That involves increasing our 1:1 case management; conducting all trainings for kids and families virtually; introducing an entirely new virtual curriculum; and finding innovative ways to bring our community together, safely. And it also means connecting with a growing cohort of chronically ill kids who need your support to mitigate elevated levels of stress and anxiety—children whose parents are up against mounting hospital bills amid economic uncertainty. **Now more than ever, these two groups need each other. Now more than ever, we need your support.**

While the future remains unclear for all of us, what we do know is that your support for Team IMPACT will significantly improve the long-term emotional well-being of both high-risk kids and student athletes—our future leaders—at a pivotal moment in their lives and in the world. We are looking to our supporters to consider an additional investment that will allow Team IMPACT to strengthen one of two key initiatives: enhancing virtual programming and increasing access to our program; and strengthening our student athlete development training and curriculum to build better leaders for tomorrow.

Our children can’t take a break from battling illness, and we can’t take a break from supporting them. We thank you for your consideration of this gift. Together, we can make a lifelong impact on the children, families and young adults at a time when they need us most.

With appreciation,

Seth Rosenzweig

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