

**Eliminating Barriers to Youth Sports in Pitt County**

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**Keywords:** Non-Profit organization, fundraising, scholarship, youth sports, diversity, inclusion

### Abstract

This case study provides an opportunity for students to better understand barriers faced by low-income families participating in local sport opportunities and then offer creative solutions in an attempt to alleviate some barriers and create a more inclusive sports community. This case focuses on the reoccurring struggle that the Greenville Recreation and Parks Department (GRPD) faces when trying to increase diversity in youth sports programs and create inclusive programs for all youth, regardless of socioeconomic status. GRPD's Development Intern, Sarah, identifies issues with the current financial assistance program that GRPD offers as well as collects feedback from community members detailing community needs that are not being met. This case provides an opportunity for students to: 1) examine how sports organizations unintentionally create barriers for some members of the community; 2) develop inclusive systems in attempt to counteract identified barriers; 3) find innovative ways to eliminate barriers to youth sport participation.

## **Eliminating Barriers to Youth Sports in Pitt County**

### **Case Study**

Given that physical activity has so many well-known benefits, this case addresses the problematic decrease in the youth athletic participation rate from 44.5% to 36%, between the years of 2008 and 2018 (Solomon, 2018). For many, the cost of youth athletics is the main barrier. Simply playing, watching, and excelling in sports is dependent upon individuals, families, governments or private organizations resources (Coakley, 2017). For many families, money has to be prioritized for necessities such as food, water and shelter, leaving less discretionary income for youth athletic fees. This case focuses on the reoccurring struggle that the Greenville Recreation and Parks Department (GRPD) faces when trying to increase diversity in youth sports programs and create inclusive programs for all youth, regardless of socioeconomic status. This case outlines the current scholarship program that the GRPD offers as well as feedback from community members that details community needs that are not being met by GRPD. This case provides an opportunity for students to: 1) examine how sports organizations unintentionally create barriers for some members of the community; 2) develop a plan for inclusive systems in attempt to counteract identified barriers; 3) find innovative ways to eliminate barriers to youth sport participation. This case is intended for use in strategic management, contemporary sport issues/sport sociology class, non-profit development, and youth sport administration courses. It provides instructors with the opportunity to emphasize the importance of diversity and inclusion in addressing current issues in sport. The case also highlights how current research should play a key role in strategic, well- informed decision making and planning.

47 Sarah, a local college student, stood stunned in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom she had been  
48 volunteering in for the past semester. The students adored her and loved asking her questions  
49 about her favorite sports to play, team to cheer for or shows to watch. Many of the students  
50 shared with Sarah that they have never had the opportunity to play on a sports team but dreamed  
51 about being able to one day. As Sarah reminisced on her life before college, playing on various  
52 sports teams had been some of her fondest memories. She had made the greatest friends, learned  
53 incredible life lessons, exercised for at least 60 minutes every day without realizing it and felt  
54 extremely connected to her community, all through her participation in local sport leagues. It was  
55 something she realized she took for granted, growing up in a two-parent, two income home a few  
56 hours away. Youth sport played an integral part of Sarah's childhood, and it was heartbreaking  
57 for her to think that this group of 5<sup>th</sup> graders would not get that experience.

58 Sarah knew the facts surrounding youth sport. She took a sport management course the  
59 semester prior and learned about this emerging reality in our society. The numbers were etched  
60 in her mind, youth athletic participation in the United States decreased from 44.5% to 36%,  
61 between the years of 2008 and 2018 (Solomon, 2018). Simply playing, watching, and excelling  
62 in sports is dependent upon individuals, families, governments or private organizations resources  
63 (Coakley, 2017). Sarah's professor was constantly reminding the class that parents worried  
64 about putting food on the table and keeping the lights on are not going to have the money for  
65 even a minimal registration fee let alone the more commercialized sport opportunities available.  
66 According to a survey done by the Aspen Institute, the average household income of families  
67 whose children participate in formalized youth sports is \$90,908, much higher than U.S average  
68 of \$59,039 (See Appendix I, Figures 1 & 2) (Youth Sports Facts, n.d.). Knowing and hearing the  
69 facts in class was one thing but seeing the reality among a group of 5<sup>th</sup> graders was another thing.

70           As part of Sarah's coursework, she was tasked with finding a local problem and  
71 proposing solutions. Sarah would take this task to heart and wanted to address the issue of  
72 exclusivity in youth sports. She immediately drove over to the Greenville Recreation and Parks  
73 Department (GPRD) offices to see if she could help. She knew tax dollars funded the  
74 department, and also knew their goals were to be as inclusive as possible. After a conversation  
75 with the director, Sarah was offered the opportunity to take on the role as GPRD Development  
76 Intern for the upcoming semester. GPRD had recognized this issue, and also wanted to see it  
77 addressed. This opportunity would give Sarah an inside look on how a youth sport organization  
78 runs.

79           On the first day of her new internship, Sarah discussed the concerns she had personally  
80 observed in the community with John, the Assistant Director of GRPD, who would be serving as  
81 her internship supervisor. Although John was already aware of the problem, he was surprised to  
82 hear Sarah recalling her experience with the 5<sup>th</sup> graders. He explained to her the different youth  
83 sports opportunities that GRPD offers from summer camp, to seasonal leagues, to art and dance  
84 camps. Even though GRPD tries to keep their costs relatively low, there is still a fee associated  
85 with participating in any of these activities. Sarah assumed that this cost must be one of the main  
86 reasons keeping families from walking in the doors of GRPD and signing up.

87           John informed Sarah that there is currently a financial assistance program offered by  
88 GRPD to accommodate for some families that cannot afford the costs associated with playing  
89 formalized youth sports. If a financial assistance program already existed, why were more  
90 families not participating? What else was stopping parents from signing their kids up for sport  
91 opportunities they obviously desired to take part in?

92

### 93 **Background on Greenville, North Carolina**

94 Greenville, North Carolina is located in the eastern part of the state, in Pitt County. The  
95 current population of Greenville is 93,137 people, making it the 11<sup>th</sup> largest city in North  
96 Carolina. The median income for households in Greenville, NC is \$36,486. The demographics in  
97 Greenville, NC are broken down to 53.99% white, 38.24% African American, 2.74% Asian,  
98 2.44% two or more races, and 2.59% other races (Greenville, n.d.).

99 Greenville, NC is home to many different youth sport programs including, but not limited  
100 to The Greenville Recreation and Parks Department (GRPD), numerous privately funded sports  
101 leagues and two baseball leagues, including the Greenville North State Little League Team that  
102 made a Little League World Series run in 2017. The cost to participant in the city's Little  
103 Leagues is \$95. Although this is below the \$150 national average for Little League registration  
104 costs, registration can cost as little as \$30 in some cities and as much as \$250 in some suburbs  
105 (Keshner, 2019). Greenville, NC is also home to a large Division I (DI) University, East Carolina  
106 University (ECU). ECU competes in 15 DI sports, is home to over 400 student athletes and is  
107 supported by one of the most loyal fan bases in college sports. Sports Illustrated even named  
108 Greenville, NC Sportstown USA for the immense amount of sporting activities and parks located  
109 in Greenville as well as the energetic sports atmosphere.

110

### 111 **Background on Greenville Recreation and Parks (GRPD)**

112 Across the United States, Recreation and Parks services are typically provided from one  
113 of three sectors: the public sector, the private sector, or non-profit organizations. The public  
114 sector is commonly known as recreation and parks agencies at the national, state, regional and  
115 local levels of government (Landes, 2004). GRPD is a city level organization operated and

116 funded by the City of Greenville. GRPD provides parks, recreational facilities, and programs all  
117 funded by local tax dollars for use by the general public. “The aim of community recreation and  
118 parks is to improve the quality of life for your residents, giving them opportunities to enhance  
119 their physical, social, spiritual, cultural and intellectual well-being” (Recreation & Parks, n.d.).

120         The GRPD provides a variety of athletic, recreational and arts and crafts activities for all  
121 ages and special populations. GRPD maintains over 25 parks and recreational facilities in the  
122 Greenville community including, but not limited to, gyms, swimming pools, soccer, baseball and  
123 softball complexes, parks, and playgrounds (Recreation & Parks, n.d.). GRPD prides themselves  
124 on cultivating a tremendous sense of community through “family, fun and foundation”. They  
125 promote involvement for a lifetime and teach not only skills for the courts and fields but life  
126 skills such as teamwork and conduct (Recreation & Parks, n.d.). The mission of GRPD is to  
127 advance parks, recreation and environmental conservation efforts that promote mental and  
128 physical health, serve as a deterrent to illegal or inappropriate behaviors and enhance  
129 Greenville’s quality of life.

130         GRPD currently offers baseball, basketball, fencing, flag football, golf, gymnastics, self-  
131 defense, soccer, swim clubs and tennis for youth. Seasonal teams are offered for each sport as  
132 well as clinics at varying centers and gyms. Prices vary from \$25 to \$135 depending on the type  
133 of program and duration of the program.

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### 135 **Background on GRPD’s Financial Assistance Program**

136         GRPD offers a fee assistance program for families in need. Currently, GRPD does not  
137 have a specific amount of funds allocated for the financial assistance program. The financial  
138 assistance received by families results in a reduction in the overall revenue of the department.

139 Because no outside funding is raised, and city funding cannot be increased, there is no  
140 designated amount of money that can be used per year on scholarships. This creates a large  
141 inconsistency in if children can continue to participate from year to year, due to lack of advance  
142 knowledge on how much money can be allocated per year. Although GRPD wants to increase  
143 participation and diversity within their programs, they have to be cognizant of also driving  
144 revenue for the department to cover all costs and salaries, thus not being able to supply for the  
145 full demand of financial assistance needed in the community. To minimize the impact on the  
146 budget, GRPD limits each individual to a maximum of \$150 per year in financial assistance. As  
147 of July 1 2019, 109 scholarships were issued during the 2019 fiscal year, totaling \$10,266. Of  
148 that total, \$5,892 has been used by scholarship recipients for program participation.

149 To be eligible to apply for the financial assistance program, you must be a Greenville  
150 resident and show proof of need in the form of a federal or state insurance card for low-income  
151 families or approved Free & Reduced school lunch application. Paperwork for the financial  
152 assistance program can be picked up at one recreation facility, located in a more affluent area of  
153 Greenville. This creates a challenge for many low-income families due to lack of public  
154 transportation within this area. Once the paperwork has been filled out, residents must bring the  
155 completed paperwork, proof of need, and proof of residency back into the specific recreation  
156 facility where they picked up the paperwork to be turned in and go through the approval process.  
157 If approved, you must pay a \$10 deposit towards the program fee.

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### 159 **The Problem**

160 Everyone in the GRPD business headquarters office where Sarah worked seemed to  
161 believe that the current financial assistance program was easily accessible to community



162 members. The office Sarah worked in was about a 10-15 minute drive away from all the other  
163 athletic and recreational facilities. As Sarah's internship continued, she traveled around from  
164 center to center observing staff, families and athletic practices. She quickly realized the  
165 differences in demographics as she toured all of the different facilities. No facility operated quite  
166 the same as the other, yet they were all expected to use the same processes and guidelines. There  
167 seemed to be a huge disconnect between the administration located in the business headquarters  
168 office and the athletics staff working at the various recreational facilities. Some of the athletics  
169 staff believed their input, and the input of the parents who visited their facilities, was not being  
170 heard. Everyone was contributing different ideas on how to improve and better reach the  
171 surrounding community, but progress was at a standstill. Sarah decided she wanted to further  
172 research the matter and discover what specific barriers families were facing.

173 Sarah decided that the best way to understand the problem was to ask parents in the  
174 community themselves. Not only did she want to talk to current families participating in the  
175 financial assistance program on how it could be improved, but also families in the community  
176 that might not know about the program. She then worked with her university's research board  
177 (i.e., IRB) to make sure she would gather the information in an appropriate and ethical manner.  
178 After receiving approval, and with the help of her supervisor and athletics staff at each center,  
179 Sarah was able to reach out to parents and block off times to be at each center to host the focus  
180 groups. Sarah also reached out to other community centers, such as faith-based family centers, in  
181 attempt to find families that currently do not participate in GRPD programs. Sarah found 20  
182 parents that were willing to participate in focus groups to delve into the root of this problem and  
183 try to create innovative solutions. The demographics of participants in Sarah's focus groups  
184 consisted of 55% African Americans, 20% Whites and 25% Hispanics.

185           The parents, mostly mothers, sat with Sarah in groups of 2-6 people and had long  
186 conversations detailing the barriers they, or people they know, have faced when attempting to get  
187 their kids involved in youth sports. With signed permission from the parents, the conversations  
188 were recorded so that Sarah could transcribe their conversations and find commonalities between  
189 all of the focus groups. All of the parent's comments were kept anonymous so that they could  
190 freely speak their minds. Although Sarah was asking specific questions, and answers were being  
191 recorded, all of the conversations were very casual and friendly, allowing parents to speak their  
192 minds and collectively provide feedback and suggestions for GRPD and other local youth sport  
193 organizations.

194           After Sarah collected, coded and analyzed all the data, she found many reoccurring  
195 themes. The barriers she found most common within the community are lack of awareness,  
196 transportation, high costs to participate, ineffective communication and marketing, and lack of  
197 parental buy-in and connection with the youth sports programs. See Appendix I, figure 3 for a  
198 summary.

199           Within every focus group, the conversation of high costs to participate came up  
200 frequently. Parents stated that not only is there a fee to participate, but there are many other costs  
201 associated with playing as well. Families must provide all equipment and uniforms, besides the  
202 jersey or t-shirt provided. Buying cleats, bats, socks, balls, pads, etc. every season can become  
203 very expensive, especially if you have multiple children.

204           Transportation was the second most common barrier among parents. Many parents do not  
205 have access to a car, making getting their child to and from practice nearly impossible. There are  
206 numerous recreation centers in the Pitt County community, so most parents send their child to  
207 the one closest to their house, often walking distance. This is convenient for afterschool care and

208 activities, but when games and practices take place at a different facility, many children cannot  
209 participate due to lack of transportation. Other parents stated that they do have access to a car but  
210 have a family member that works night shifts or weekends, therefore, not being home to  
211 transport a child to games. GRPD currently does not offer any sort of transportation system.

212 Another common theme Sarah discovered was the lack of knowledge and information  
213 parents had about the scholarship program and GRPD's programs in general. During the focus  
214 groups, parents found the root of this problem to be in the marketing and communication  
215 strategies. A lot of information is sent out via emails or advertised on the internet. Although this  
216 reaches a large population at once, it is missing a large demographic of people who may not have  
217 access to the internet or a computer on a regular basis. Many parents also stated that paper  
218 advertisements are displayed, but only in select locations. Many of these locations are far from  
219 certain Recreation centers such as South Greenville and Epps, centers located in more low-  
220 income areas of the city. Some parents had no idea that scholarships even existed due to lack of  
221 marketing to all members of the community rather than a more targeted approach.

222 After Sarah listened to all the parents she realized there was a huge gap between what  
223 GRPD believed they were doing well, and the services and support the parents felt were being  
224 offered to them. Sarah sat down with the leaders of GRPD and shared the results with them.  
225 They also found this to be concerning and wanted to make changes to better support their  
226 community and make their programs more supportive for all families. The GRPD tasked Sarah  
227 and her internship supervisor with creating new guidelines for an inclusive system that would  
228 attempt to break down the barriers families felt were standing in the way of participating in their  
229 sports teams. What should Sarah's next steps be in developing inclusive sport systems for

230 families in the Pitt County community? How will she effectively market these new systems to  
231 increase accessibility and participation for low-income families?

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253 **Discussion Questions**

- 254 1. How could GRPD redesign their financial assistance application and process to make it  
255 easier for families to access and complete?
- 256 2. What systems could GRPD initiate in order to address the following barriers?
- 257 a. Transportation
- 258 b. High Cost of Equipment
- 259 c. Communication with Families
- 260 3. How would you effectively market the programs being offered through GRPD so more  
261 families are aware of the services they offer? How would you know more families are  
262 being reached by your marketing strategies?
- 263 4. One concern GRPD has about providing more financial assistance opportunities is losing  
264 revenue for their business and not fully being able to support the demand of community  
265 members in need. What types of fundraisers could the GRPD hold to raise money for  
266 scholarships?
- 267 5. What outside organizations could GRPD potentially partner with to fill gaps within their  
268 organization? How could a relationship between GRPD and an outside organization be  
269 mutually beneficial?
- 270 6. What types of events could GRPD host in order to promote diversity? (Given the  
271 restrictions faced during the 2020 pandemic, offer both in-person and virtual options.)

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276 **Teaching Notes**

277 This case study provides an opportunity for students to better understand barriers faced  
278 by low-income families in terms of participating in local sport opportunities. The case provides  
279 students with the ability to first identify barriers and then offer creative solutions in an attempt to  
280 alleviate some barriers and create a more inclusive sports community. This case focuses on the  
281 reoccurring yet timely struggle that the Greenville Recreation and Parks Department (GRPD)  
282 encounters when trying to increase diversity in youth sports programs and create inclusive  
283 programs for all youth, regardless of socioeconomic status. The case is especially timely due to  
284 the financial impacts of COVID-19 as youth sports organizations will most likely continue to  
285 struggle in increasing diversity in the upcoming future (Warner & Martin, 2020). A recent poll  
286 indicated “49% of parents believe their children will be less likely to participate in youth sports  
287 due to financial circumstances” (Baker & Tracy, 2020). Thus, this case represents an ongoing  
288 and opportune time to address the issue as youth sports organizations will face a major crisis in  
289 making youth sport more accessible across racial and economic divides due to the ongoing  
290 affects the of the pandemic (Warner & Martin, 2020). In this case, GRPD’s Development Intern,  
291 Sarah, identifies issues with the current financial assistance program that the GRPD offers as  
292 well as collects feedback from community members that details community needs that are not  
293 being met by GRPD. This case provides an opportunity for students to: 1) examine how sports  
294 organizations unintentionally create barriers for some members of the community; 2) develop  
295 inclusive systems in attempt to counteract identified barriers; 3) find innovative ways to  
296 eliminate barriers to youth sport participation.

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## 299 **Instructor Use and Learning Objectives**

300           This case was written for use in both undergraduate and graduate strategic management,  
301 contemporary sport issues/sport sociology class, non-profit development, and youth sport  
302 administration courses. It is recommended that this case be used during units focused on non-  
303 profit development, youth sport participation and/or fundraising and event development. It  
304 provides instructors with the opportunity to emphasize how current issues in sport can be solved  
305 with strategic, well-informed, thinking. The case also highlights how gathering data and current  
306 research should inform decision making and planning.

307           First, general discussion questions and suggested responses are provided for the  
308 instructor, as well as suggested class activities. Second, content specific uses for graduate or  
309 more focused undergraduate courses will be provided for instructors that would like to  
310 implement further learning activities.

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312 Instructors who assign this case and implement the activities associated with this case in their  
313 curriculum will find their students able to do the following:

- 314       • Identify barriers many families face when trying to get involved in youth sports leagues.
- 315       • Discuss ways that organizations can make processes, such as registration, accessible to  
316 all families regardless of socioeconomic status.
- 317       • Create systems (policies and guidelines) that can be implemented by organizations to  
318 help alleviate barriers.
- 319       • Develop a fundraising plan.
- 320       • Connect how insights learned from this case study can be transferred to other sports  
321 organizations in their own community.

## 322 **General Discussion Questions and Suggested Responses**

323 Instructors can use the following discussion questions provided at the end of the student case and  
324 suggested activities to facilitate more detailed discussions and evaluate student learning.

### 325 **1. How could GRPD redesign their financial assistance application and process to** 326 **make it easier for families to access and complete?**

327 Answers will vary, but students should identify that providing forms for the financial  
328 assistance program at only one GRPD location is not practical for families not living in  
329 that area, especially families that may lack transportation. Instead, financial assistance  
330 forms should be located at all GRPD locations, so that families may pick them up at any  
331 center they frequent. The forms should also be on the GRPD website, so that families  
332 may fill them out at home, if they have access to a computer and internet. This would  
333 also make it possible for families to access them in places that offer public internet  
334 connection such as the library. To ensure that community members, outside current  
335 GRPD participants, know about the financial assistance program, applications should also  
336 be sent home from the children's schools. This would require GRPD to cultivate a  
337 relationship with Pitt County Public Schools. GRPD could ask to send home the financial  
338 assistance application, as well as a booklet of all sports and activities being offered that  
339 season, with all students. Forms should be provided in English and Spanish to better  
340 include the large Latino population in Pitt County. After the applications are reviewed by  
341 GRPD staff, a notification should be sent to families via phone call and letter to their  
342 home, to inform them if their application has been approved or denied. It is not feasible to  
343 require all families to come back and forth to the one specified center to see if their child  
344 has been approved for a scholarship.



345 **2. What systems could GRPD initiate in order to address the following barriers?**

346 **a. Transportation**

347 In order to accommodate for families that do not have access to a car or a parent  
348 that can transport them to and from practice, some type of carpooling system  
349 should be created. Coaches or GRPD staff could implement a carpooling system  
350 for different teams by putting all parents in contact with one another and creating  
351 a platform for them to request or offer rides. Many kids who play on the same  
352 team also attend the same school, so parents could rotate picking up from school  
353 and taking the kids to practice. In the focus groups, many families stated that they  
354 would be willing to do this on days that they did not have to work during practice  
355 or game times but did not have any way of getting in contact or even knowing the  
356 parents of other kids on the team. Because GRPD cannot provide transportation  
357 for every child, creating a platform and open dialogue between parents, would  
358 allow for more kids to get to and from practice and games regardless of personal  
359 transportation issues. One platform that could be utilized is the GoKid app, which  
360 is a free ride sharing app with parents that you trust. You can import a team's  
361 schedule directly into the app and parents can organize rides to and from practices  
362 and games (GoKid, 2020).

363 **b. High Cost of Equipment**

364 Many families have excess equipment in their homes that their children cannot  
365 use because of outgrowing it or switching to another sport. For many families,  
366 most of this equipment has only been used for one or two seasons. GRPD should  
367 implement an Equipment Swap within their organization. Families could bring in

368 excess equipment such as bats, helmets, cleats, shin guards, gloves, etc. that they  
369 are not using for weeks leading up to the drive. Families could then come back at  
370 assigned times to pick up equipment that their child could use for the current  
371 season. Families that are a part of the financial assistance program should have  
372 access to the equipment first, in order to ensure that their child has the equipment  
373 they need regardless of financial hardships.

374 **c. Communication with Families**

375 Parents need to be informed about opportunities. It is vital that GRPD staff and  
376 coaches communicate well to make sure all kids are able to stay engaged. It is  
377 important for parents to know all expectations and guidelines, as well as have an  
378 opportunity to voice concerns or give suggestions to the coaches and GRPD staff.  
379 Families should be given a welcome packet after registering their child for a  
380 specific sports team or camp that details the practice schedule, game schedule,  
381 equipment needs, and anything else the parent may need to know. This packet  
382 could also serve as a way for GRPD to market other programs by including fliers  
383 for other upcoming camps. Coaches should set up a parents' meeting before the  
384 first practice that all parents will be encouraged to attend, if their schedule allows.  
385 This meeting would give parents the opportunity to meet the coaches their child  
386 will be working with, meet other parents, and have an opportunity to voice any  
387 concerns or suggestions about the team. For families that have access to a cell  
388 phone, setting up a team communication platform such as GroupMe would be  
389 helpful as a way to send updates, reminders or any cancellations.

390 **3. How would you effectively market the programs being offered through GRPD so**  
391 **more families are aware of the services they offer? How would you know more**  
392 **families are being reached by your marketing strategies?**

393 *Answers will vary.* Marketing strategies and campaigns must reach their target audience  
394 in order to be effective. GRPD and Sarah first need to identify their target audience which  
395 would be anyone in the Greenville community with a child aged 4-18. Their target  
396 audience for marketing all of their programs will include all demographics including  
397 race, gender, socioeconomic status, geographical location, etc., while marketing their  
398 financial assistance program needs to be targeted towards lower-income families.  
399 Currently, GRPD uses mainly online platforms to market their programs. Although they  
400 intend to market to all demographics, online marketing unintentionally targets more  
401 affluent families who have access to computers, smartphones, Wi-Fi, cable television,  
402 etc. Putting an emphasis on print marketing and face-to-face marketing will help GRPD  
403 truly market programs to all demographics. In order to market their programs to new  
404 families, GRPD needs to ensure that their marketing materials are being placed in all  
405 parts of the community. Hanging fliers and banners around the community is an effective  
406 way to market the start of the season for specific sports. Ideal locations would include  
407 popular restaurants, community centers, public libraries and office buildings, in all parts  
408 of the City of Greenville. Another effective marketing strategy would be to provide  
409 handouts and booklets of sports and camp offerings to all public schools. This  
410 information could be sent home with every kid to ensure all families have access to the  
411 materials. In order to reengage families that have already participated in GRPD programs,  
412 postcards can be sent to every house of current GRPD participants to remind them of

413 upcoming registrations for sports and camps. Informative materials can also be sent home  
414 with each family after the last game of a particular sports season, informing them of what  
415 registrations will be opening up next. Overall, there needs to be more targeted marketing  
416 devoted to the financial assistance program. The financial assistance program needs to be  
417 mentioned on all promotional materials, so that families know there are opportunities for  
418 them to participate regardless of socioeconomic status.

419 **4. One concern GRPD has about providing more financial assistance opportunities is**  
420 **losing revenue for their organization and not fully being able to support the demand**  
421 **of community members in need. What types of fundraisers could the GRPD hold to**  
422 **raise money for scholarships?**

423 *Answers will vary.* One way that GRPD could raise more money for scholarships is by  
424 creating a non-profit, 501(C)(3) organization in conjunction with the Recreation  
425 department. This would allow GRPD to raise money through corporate sponsorships and  
426 donors. GRPD could publicize their financial assistance program to corporations and  
427 local businesses and ask them to donate money towards the scholarship fund, in exchange  
428 for marketing of their business, for example their logo being featured on game jerseys.  
429 Another fundraiser the GRPD could initiate would be a “Donate A Season” program.  
430 Since the GRPD keeps costs to participate relatively low, the registration cost is not seen  
431 as a high financial barrier for more affluent families in the community. By placing a  
432 “donate a season” option on the registration forms, families that could afford it, would be  
433 able to donate the registration fee to a student that needs financial assistance. GRPD  
434 could also hosts local fundraisers within the community. GRPD should focus on  
435 leveraging assets that they have access to, such as the local university’s Division I

436 athletes that may have come through the program. By partnering with the sports  
437 department at the local university, the DI athletes could host a sports clinic for GRPD  
438 athletes. This also serves as an opportunity for the University to positively promote itself  
439 by getting involved in the community, creating an equal partnership between the  
440 University and the Recreation and Parks Department.

441 **5. What outside organizations could GRPD potentially partner with to fill gaps within**  
442 **their organization? How could a relationship between GRPD and an outside**  
443 **organization be mutually beneficial?**

444 *Answers will vary.* GRPD could potentially with other sports organizations that focus on  
445 diversity and inclusion or other foundations that could help them provide more funding  
446 for their scholarships. A potential organization that GRPD could partner with would be  
447 the Jackie Robinson Baseball League. In the past, the Jackie Robinson Baseball League  
448 has talked about the potential of sponsoring a Greenville Little League Team. GRPD  
449 could potentially talk to them about sponsoring a part of their scholarship program such  
450 as the equipment needs of scholarship athletes.

451 **6. What types of events could GRPD host in order to promote diversity?**

452 GRPD could implement different events in order to promote diversity in their community  
453 and within their organization. One event they could celebrate is Jackie Robinson Day that  
454 many other sports organizations such as the MLB observe each year. GRPD could  
455 celebrate this event to educate their community on who Jackie Robinson is and celebrate  
456 diverse athletes in their community. GRPD could also host community events during  
457 Black History month or Hispanic Heritage month. During Black History month, GRPD  
458 could host a festival one weekend where families could come out and participate in a

459 scavenger hunt to learn more about African American athletes, watch a movie featuring  
460 athletes of color such as *42*, and participate in a skills clinic with diverse coaches and  
461 college athletes in their community. Due to COVID-19, events need to be offered  
462 virtually as well. Instead of showing a movie in person, you could invite families to  
463 participate in a movie viewing together online and then have a group discussion about the  
464 movie via a platform such as Zoom.

465

### 466 **Suggested Class Activities**

- 467 1. Students should research other publicly funded sports organizations, such as the  
468 Recreation and Parks Departments in their area or surrounding areas, in order to identify  
469 if other organizations have a financial assistance or scholarship program. Students should  
470 then list out any similarities and differences between the financial assistance program  
471 they found and GRPD's financial assistance program. Include any suggestions of things  
472 other organizations "do well" that the GRPD could adopt into their own program.
- 473 2. Students should draft a mock Financial Assistance Application and Application Steps &  
474 Guidelines document to provide to families. Students should focus on making these  
475 documents as effective and efficient as possible, explaining each step in simple, easy to  
476 follow terms. The application should be professional and easy to complete. Students can  
477 give suggestions on how they feel the application should be distributed (hard copies, via  
478 the website, etc.). The Steps and Guidelines document should give families all of the  
479 information they need to know about the financial assistance program such as who can  
480 apply, what documents you need to be eligible, where to submit the form, when you  
481 should expect to hear an answer, etc.

482 3. Students should be asked to write and present a fundraising pitch that could be used to  
483 generate corporate partnerships or donations in support of the financial assistance  
484 program. Students may choose to focus on a corporate partnership, such as a sporting  
485 goods store donating equipment in return for their logo or company name being branded  
486 on team uniforms, or corporate and individual donations directly to the scholarship fund.  
487 The fundraising pitch should include all of the pertinent details such as organization  
488 name, description of the organization, explanation of the financial assistance program,  
489 and how the donation will be used. Students should practice with a partner, give and  
490 receive feedback and then present the pitch to the entire class.

491

## 492 **Content Specific Uses For Graduate or More Focused Undergraduate Courses**

### 493 **Rising Costs to Youth Sport Participation**

494 For instructors utilizing this case to illustrate the increasing commercialization of youth  
495 and lack of accessibility to youth sports for low income families, it is suggested that Kahma's  
496 (2010) work, *Sport and Social Class: The Case of Finland*, be assigned as background reading  
497 before students are assigned this case study. This article focuses on the physical activity levels  
498 and sports participation levels of different social classes, with low social classes participating  
499 significantly less.

500 Graduate school instructors that wish to guide a more in-depth discussion about the rising  
501 costs of youth sports are encouraged to assign Mark Hyman's book, '*The Most Expensive Game  
502 in Town, The Rising Cost of Youth Sports and The Toll on Today's Families*' (2012) as a  
503 prerequisite reading. Hyman goes into detail about all of the costs associated with playing youth  
504 sports in today's society, including the costs to register, travel, buy equipment, etc. Many of

505 these costs are recognized as barriers to participation by families in the Greenville area. Most  
506 students, unless they have children participating in sport, are unaware of the associated costs.

507 **Learning Activity: Rising Costs to Youth Sport Participation**

508 **Student Instructions:**

509 After reading Kahma (2010) and/or Hyman (2012), create an itemized list of everything  
510 included in the high costs of participating in organized youth sport leagues. This should  
511 include everything from costs to register, buy equipment, travel, etc. You should then  
512 find prices of each of the items on your list based on websites for different sporting goods  
513 stores, sports organizations, large tournaments, etc. GRPD registration prices can be  
514 found on their website, or you may use the price of any other youth sports organization,  
515 such as one that you participated in. After creating an itemized and priced list of all the  
516 expenses, you should then decide on a dollar amount that each scholarship should provide  
517 for the youth sports organization that you chose. Provide reason for the amount you  
518 decided on by discussing the prices of each item you researched.

519 The following is an example of a student response:

520 Organization Name: GRPD Greenie League Baseball Ages 7-9

521 Registration Costs: \$35

522 Equipment Costs: \$210

523 Bat: \$49.99 (Dick's Sporting Goods)

524 Glove: \$34.99 (Dick's Sporting Goods)

525 Cleats: \$24.99 (Dick's Sporting Goods)

526 Socks: \$10 (Dick's Sporting Goods)

527 Helmet: \$29.99 (Dick's Sporting Goods)



528 Pants: \$35.00 (Dick's Sporting Goods)

529 Jersey: Provided

530 Hat: Provided

531 Bat Bag: \$24.99 (Dick's Sporting Goods)

532 State Tournament: No Tournament for this age group

533 Hotel Costs: N/A

534 Travel to Tournament: N/A

535 Scholarship Amount Provided: \$185

536 Justification: The registration fee to participate in this particular baseball league is \$35.

537 Equipment costs based on the average price at Dick's Sporting Goods for each item

538 totaled around \$210. \$185 should be given in scholarship to participate in this baseball

539 league to cover registration and the costs of most equipment for families in need. There is

540 no necessary travel to tournaments for this particular baseball league, so no scholarship

541 funds would be necessary for tournament costs, hotel costs and travel costs.

542

### 543 **Fundraising Planning**

544 Fundraising is one of the main initiatives GRPD needs to undertake in order to raise

545 monetary funds that can be allocated to financial assistance scholarships. It is suggested that

546 students read Robert Fogal's chapter (2010), "Designing and Managing the Fundraising

547 Program". This chapter emphasizes the importance of fundraising for all non-profit organizations

548 and addresses ways to integrate fundraising into an organization's life.

549 Fogal's work details three stages of fundraising development which represent the steps

550 through which nonprofits progress when developing fundraising programs. The three stages to

551 fundraising development include the formative stage which consists of only fundraising to stay  
552 afloat, the normative stage which includes developing relationships with donors and the  
553 integrative stage where philanthropy is placed at the center of who the business is and what they  
554 do (Fogal, 2010). By understanding these stages, students will be able to better develop  
555 fundraising initiatives and plans that GRPD could implement. Fogal discusses the important of  
556 strong management during the creation and execution fundraising programs, as well as creating a  
557 strong team with strong ethical values. The instructor may lead a discussion on who to include  
558 on a fundraising team, the pros of cons of creating a fundraising team, and issues that may come  
559 up when planning and executing different fundraising programs.

#### 560 **Learning Activity: Fundraising Planning**

##### 561 **Student Instruction:**

562 GRPD needs to raise monetary funds in order to support the need of financial assistance  
563 in the Greenville community. Not only can GRPD secure sponsorships with corporations  
564 in the community, but they can also host their own fundraisers. Create a fundraising plan  
565 for one event you will host next year to raise money for the scholarship program. Be sure  
566 to include all the details of the event, your timeline for planning the event, your event  
567 planning team, and what your goals are for the event.

568

569 An example of a fundraising event is outlined below:

570 One asset that GRPD has access to is the university close by. East Carolina  
571 University (ECU) is home to a plethora of Division I athletes. For this fundraiser, DI  
572 athletes from ECU will host a skills clinic for kids in the community.

573           The first step in planning this fundraiser is to contact the athletic director at ECU.  
574           The athletic director will need to put me in contact with coaches as well as approve the  
575           usage of ECU fields and equipment. After deciding on a date with the athletic director  
576           and getting his approval, I will contact the ECU coaches for the sports currently in off-  
577           season, since they will not be traveling or playing on the weekends.

578           The decided date for our fundraiser is Saturday, October 10<sup>th</sup> from 9am-12pm.  
579           Kids will have the opportunity to work on drills with Division I athletes and coaches in  
580           the following sports: Baseball/Softball, Basketball and Lacrosse. Kids will be split up by  
581           age groups and rotate through 3 sessions, one session with each sport. The fee for this  
582           skills clinic will be \$30 per child. All money will go towards the financial assistance  
583           program.

584           We will begin marketing this clinic during GRPD summer camps in July and  
585           August. Families may register on the GRPD website or through filling out the form and  
586           turning it in to any of the GRPD locations in Greenville. We will also create fliers and  
587           posters to hang up in all GRPD locations, restaurants around the community, around the  
588           ECU campus and at local parks.

589           Our goal for this fundraiser is to raise \$1800. We hope to have 60 kids participate  
590           in this skills clinic for \$30 each, totaling \$1800. Another goal for the fundraiser is for  
591           ECU to donate the rental of the fields and equipment, so that there are no costs for this  
592           event.

### 593   **Social Issues & Diversity**

594           This case also can be utilized to cultivate discussions on the relationship between sport  
595           and social issues, discuss social class divides in the context of sport, understand the interplay

596 among sport and the economy, and understand problems that arise in the USA from differences  
597 in age, ethnicity, culture, national origin, ability, etc. Instructors of Contemporary Sport and  
598 Social Issues courses can use the case as a supplemental activity and learning tool. For a focus  
599 on sport and social class, the previously mentioned readings should be assigned prior to the case  
600 (Kahma, 2010; Hyman, 2012); however, for instructors that wish to focus more on diversity and  
601 inclusion it is encouraged that students read Cunningham's work (e.g., Cunningham, 2019), as  
602 well as works found within both the sport and leisure literature before reading the case study  
603 (e.g., Adair, Taylor, & Darcy, 2010; KangJae, Casper, & Floyd, 2020). These works identify the  
604 issues related to race, social class, ethnicity, and so on present at various levels of youth sport  
605 and highlight the need for communication and change at all levels of youth sport. Whether the  
606 focus is on change related to interpersonal relationships among participants or change related to  
607 policies within the youth sport organization, these works provide guidance for the reader.

608 For instructors wishing to highlight the diversity and inclusion aspects of the case, the  
609 following learning activities and/or discussion can be assigned.

#### 610 **Learning Activity: Social Issues & Diversity**

##### 611 **Student Instructions:**

612 Despite best intentions, GRPD's youth programs lack diversity. One primary  
613 impediment is cost. There are several grant programs that exist for publicly funded youth sport  
614 organizations, some of which are aimed at providing assistance in participant diversity and  
615 inclusion. By securing one of these grants, GRPD would be able to cover the cost for those in  
616 financial need. Students should do a web search to locate the best grant program possibility by  
617 matching GRPD's mission to the grant submission criteria. After the grant is identified, create a

618 one-page proposal to present to the director of GRPD to convince him that taking the time to  
619 produce and submit a grant to this organization is a worthwhile endeavor.

620 GRPD would also benefit from assigning the duties of or hiring an Outreach Coordinator.  
621 Ideally, this individual would communicate with parents and children in underserved areas,  
622 create open dialogue among these communities and the organization, and design community  
623 outreach initiatives to meet their needs. Given the current status of diversity, this person also  
624 would have an understanding of the relationship that exists between race and socioeconomic  
625 status as well as local demographic information. Create a job description to post for the purposes  
626 of hiring an Outreach Coordinator. Identify what experience is required, level and type of  
627 education, background needed, and so on. Further, justify the inclusion of this person to the staff  
628 of GRPD and although adding this person to the staff may not be financially feasible it is  
629 important to have a plan in place should funding become available.

630

### 631 **Instructor Notes: Results**

632 GRPD has been able to use the barriers discovered in the focus groups to plan out ways  
633 to eliminate barriers to youth sports within their organization. The first step GRPD is looking at  
634 taking is creating a non-profit organization in conjunction with the Recreation department of  
635 GRPD. This non-profit organization would serve to raise monetary funds for the financial  
636 assistance program, so that funds for scholarships do not come out of the GRPD's revenue, as it  
637 does with the current system. If GRPD could raise money for scholarships through corporate  
638 sponsors and individual donors, GRPD would be able to better accommodate the need for  
639 financial assistance in the community and better advertise the financial assistance program to

640 members of the community. By creating a 501(c)(3) organization, donations would also be tax  
641 deductible for all donors using the non-profits Tax Identification Number.

642 GRPD is also looking at other ways to alleviate some of the barriers. They hope to create  
643 a new application process in the future to better accommodate for families in all parts of the  
644 Greenville community, and make the process more user friendly. Recently, GRPD created a new  
645 position within their organization, the Recreation Outreach Coordinator. This position was  
646 created to implement the new marketing and communication initiatives that GRPD has created in  
647 order to cultivate more awareness of their programs, including the scholarship program, and to  
648 increase diversity. The Recreation Outreach Coordinator will create a work team to help with the  
649 development of the non-profit organization as well as to establish plans for carpooling systems or  
650 equipment drives in the near future.

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