



MEDIA RELEASE
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An Olympian to an Advocate for Athletes

Name: Matelita Buadromo

Age: 26

Country: Fiji

Role within VOA: ONOC (Oceania National Olympic Committees) Coordinator for Voices of the Athletes Program

The Olympics is the world stage for the best athletes in the nation. Matelita Buadromo, a young female swimmer from Fiji (who proudly represented her country in the 2012 Olympic Games in London, England and the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio, Brazil), can attest to the countless hours and dedication it took to perform at that level. However, it was from these experiences that she was able to connect with a program called The Voices of Athletes and understand that the title of an “Olympian” or rather an “athlete” stems more than just the physicality of participating in sports.

The Voices of Athletes (VOA) Program is associated with the Oceania National Olympic Committees (ONOC). According to Buadromo, it is a program that allows athletes voices to be heard while educating the athlete on the 5 key messages: Play Safe, Stay Healthy, Play True, Go Green, and Be a Leader. They strive to empower athletes to understand that they can use their platform to influence and inspire everyone around them. Matelita Buadromo is now the assigned ONOC Coordinator for VOA in Saipan for the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games. She reflects on the great takeaway the program has in partnership with the local athletes of the host nations. According to Buadromo, once an event is confirmed the VOA program coordinates 6 to 12 months in advance with athletes who are not participating but rather volunteering for the event. Volunteers will be trained about the mission, the impact it would have on athletes, and share ideas on games/activities that they think would be useful in spreading awareness of the 5 key messages. Buadromo says this program really is, “for athletes, by athletes”. The greatest takeaway from this partnership is that once the event is over and the VOA Coordinators leave, the volunteers of the host nation can continue the program within their athletic venues, creating what Buadromo calls a “ripple effect”. It truly has come full circle for this Fijian Olympian who is now sharing the platform with other athletes she hopes will pass on the impactful mission the Voices of Athletes program stands for.

Question: What got you involved with this program?

Matelita Buadromo shares that her involvement with this program started on the other side of the table, as an athlete. The VOA Program, she shares, is extremely active in Fiji. Since ONOC is based out of Fiji, she shares the privilege she has in participating in a lot of VOA events that are housed there. It started off small, with her participating in one of the events then sharing it with her sport/club. It then took a step further, as she was invited to talk and share the 5 key messages at bigger sporting events. Finally, it has led her to coordinate the program in regional sporting events with other athletes from different parts of the nation that want to share their personal experiences from the program.



Question: What do you want athletes to take away from the VOA educational games/activities you are hosting here?

Matelita Buadromo hopes that athletes will at least take-away one of the five key messages that the VOA program stands for. She shares that during her experience as an Olympian, the main mission was to train then compete, but by participating in this program you not only emphasize your role as an athlete, but you become a better person overall. This program she states,

“provides a holistic value to an athlete. An athlete is already a great individual because you go through so much hard work, but these key messages are so important because it impacts more than yourself, like the environment for Go Green and promoting Playing True by not taking performance enhancements, but at the same time you are learning about HIV/Aids which adds educational value to this individual who is already extraordinary because they are an athlete”.

The base takeaway of this program, says Buadromo, is just educating the overall athlete.

Question: Why is it important for athletes to know about the mission of Voices Of Athletes?

To answer this, Matelita Buadromo states “for me, it was amazing to learn and realize that there is more to being an athlete. I didn’t realize that when you are an athlete you are automatically a role model.” She shares that with the title, “athlete”, you have even more of a platform and influence on how people can positively impact different areas of their lives. “Sports is something that brings people together,” said Matelita Buadromo. This is the reason why it is so important for athletes to become educated on the 5 key messages within the Voices Of Athletes (VOA) program so they can strengthen their influence to not only their country but the entire nation.

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