



Athletes for World-Harmony

ATHLETES INTERVIEWED ABOUT THEIR SPORTS, WORLD HARMONY AND EDUCATION





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The United Nations General Assembly 58/5 on 3 Nov 2003 proclaimed 2005 as the International Year of Sport for Peace and Development

On a Special event on 2 April 2006 at the United Nations in New York on the conclusion of the Int. Year of Sport, Mr. Ogi, special adviser to the Secretary General, said:

"Sport is a vital tool to make a better world. We want healthy, educated citizens on every continent. We want development. And we want peace. We can achieve these goals through sport."

Top athletes who joined **Mr Ogi** also on 2 April at the United Nations in New York.

Roger Federer, Spokesperson for the Year and the world's top-ranked tennis star: *"Children are so often deprived of all the things in life we taken for granted, and I think that athletes should feel driven to use what sport has given them in life to help other less fortunate people."*

Tegla Loroupe of Kenya, New York Marathon winner, described the activities of her Peace Foundation in Kenya, Uganda and other places in Africa, and said: *"I can contribute something to the world: Peace through sport."*

Already since 1987 exists an international event that combines Peace and Harmony with sport: The World Harmony Run founded by Sri Chinmoy, is a global relay that seeks to promote international friendship and understanding.

As a symbol of harmony, runners carry a flaming torch, passing it from hand to hand travelling through over 80 nations around the globe. The World Harmony Run does not seek to raise money or highlight any political cause, but simply strives to create goodwill among peoples of all nations. Many Olympic Champions and other top-athletes have been drawn to participate in this event created by Sri Chinmoy. Below you will find some of the most recent statements by some of the most outstanding athletes the world has ever seen.

World Harmony Run, Switzerland

Heinz Heer



Carl Lewis

9 TIME OLYMPIC CHAMPION

Sport

» I feel Sport is a tremendous opportunity to promote peace in people's lives togetherness and inclusiveness. The lessons you learn as an athlete are lessons that are tremendous in anyone's life.

Number one, team-work, hard work, dedication, togetherness, inclusiveness, support, love, everything that is wonderful. If you are competing at your best, these are the lessons in sport everyday. «

Harmony

» Harmony for me is something that I fortunately had my entire life. I see a lot of young people today, especially in our society, that have fractured homes, that have difficult times in their upbringing child-hood. But I had such harmony throughout my life. I had wonderful parents that were very spiritual and loving.

Harmony is that. It is extending love. It is teaching, especially young people, that you work together. You give out what you want to receive back. Be a wonderful role model to your peers. Be a positive person. Study, educate, be accepting, but also demanding. This is what it really is.

I have been all over the world and children are not any different. They may be a different colour, they may be taller here or shorter. But if you go to Vietnam, out in the middle of the jungle, a five year old kid acts exactly the same as a five year old kid in New York City. I have noticed that and I think that we should learn that as adults. And transcend that to people as we go around the world. «

Education

» Every child in the world wants to be loved, wants to be cared for, wants to be supported. When for instance parents come to me and say, my child is a great athlete, they are wonderful, what shall I do, how should I train them, how should I prepare them, I tell them there is really no correlation between a nine year old and a nineteen year old in athletics. You are not sure, He could be great at nine and terrible at nineteen or terrible at nine – like me – and great at nineteen. But what you can do is just love them and support them. And then they will be successful in whatever they do. The most important thing for kids to know is that their parents will be there in the stands. «



Sri Chinmoy

FOUNDER OF THE WORLD HARMONY RUN

Dream

» I had a dream, and the name of this dream was the Peace Run. The Peace Run, which we now call our Harmony Run, is a dream, an ever-blossoming dream of our Source. This dream of ours will be valued infinitely more in the near future, and more so in the distant future. «

Vision

» Today's chaotic world cannot forever remain chaotic. World harmony, world peace: these are not mere dictionary words. These are realities, divine realities and supreme realities. For all of us who are aspiring to become good citizens of the world, our World Harmony Run is a supremely important inspiration to all of us. «

Dedication

» Each runner rightly deserves my most powerful gratitude. The Presidents, the Mayors and other dignitaries from various states and countries are helping us enormously through their stupendous encouragements.

True, our physical bodies have not been and will not be able to cover the length and breath of the world. But the spirit that we have deep within, and the spirit that we truly are, has covered the length and breath of the world many, many times. «



Paul Tergat

MARATHON WORLDRECORDHOLDER

Sport

» When we are lining up - like today thousands and thousands are lining up in London – they came from different backgrounds, different cultures, but they were able to speak the same language and that is sport.

When we are going to use sport that can be a very good and positive instrument, to people to reach and bridge the gap of hatred and disharmony. «

Harmony

» I feel that the most important thing in life is to have peace and harmony between one another. Especially for some of us that are sportsmen, without the peace itself and without the harmony we are not going anywhere.

I am happy that harmony and peace have assisted me in my family to achieve what I have achieved in my sport and has made me who I am today.

So without peace and harmony especially – I am giving an example in the sport – where we maybe have a lot of differences in terms of culture, with athletes with different colour – by the end of the day we are still talking about sport. «

Education

» So my colleagues, world-harmony is the most important thing, because it will give an opportunity to each and everyone: An opportunity to prosper and progress, an opportunity to enjoy the life and an opportunity to live. «



Katrina Webb-Denis

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER – SA • AUSTRALIAN PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE

Sport

» Harmony for me is a feeling of self acceptance and love. It is knowing who I am and my purpose in life.

It is about finding my uniqueness and celebrating my differences.

Sport has been a powerful tool in helping me discover who I am. Sport has given me the chance to work on improving my strengths, developing my weaknesses and personal confidence.

Harmony starts with the individual first. When an individual loves who they are, they can then help others.

Harmony is about finding the positives and strengths in others. It is about having empathy and not judging others for their choices and decisions.

When I have harmony in my life I feel on top of the world and inspired and motivated to make a positive difference in other people's lives. «

Harmony

» Sport has incredible potential to promote peace and harmony in the world.

Sport is a language that everyone can speak. It is not about the colour of your skin, your religion, your wealth, your disability-it is about being *the best you can be*.

Sport teaches the skills of self acceptance, goal setting, striving to be the best you can be, working with a team, respect, dedication and commitment. It is a wonderful foundation for life and for creating harmony in the world. «

Education

» Love your uniqueness and celebrate your differences. Be who 'you' want to be, make decisions based on your dreams, not the dreams of others.

» Life is for living so give 100% in all that you do.

» Spend time doing activities that you enjoy and that you are good at. Your confidence will develop and you will learn to love yourself.

» Always think first about what you can give to help others.

» Make sport an enjoyable part of your life. «



Olivier Bernhard

6 TIME IRONMAN CHAMPION

Sport

» Harmony means for me in my athletic life that body, mind and soul have to go together. That you not just move with your body, but that you also use your mind and open up your soul.

In my family life, harmony means that my family is an important part of me. But also that I live together with nature and with animals in harmony. «

Harmony

» Not just sport, but being active is very important to bring harmony to the world.

South Africa has shown me that it didn't matter which colour, black, yellow or the colour of us tourists matters, when I went running. Some people told me not to go to some place, because it was supposed to be dangerous. Well, this was for me no reason not to go running there for 2 1/2 hours. And then I had one of my most beautiful experience with the children. Before the church they were standing there at the street, cheering me and clapping my hand. Just wonderful. «

Education

» Children love to be active. I can see that with my three children. And because they are active, they love healthy food. When they are out the whole day, they love to eat vegetables. And this at age 3 and 6 years. Off course, occasionally an ice-cream they love too. But if children are allowed to follow their natural pattern of moving and playing they not just get healthy bodies, but they also develop a sound and a strong mind.

Otherwise if they are taught to be sitting still all the time in school, they not just suffer from obesity, but they also suffer mentally and psychically. «



Meb Keflezighi

SILVER MEDALLIST OLYMPIC MARATHON 2004

Sport

» I started running when I didn't speak the language when I came to the States. So it was my way to make friends. I was born in Eritrea, I lived in Milan, Italy for an year and half and the I went to the United States. New culture, new community, kids make fun of you, cause you don't speak English. So through my running I made friends.

Athletics is a positive thing. What it teaches you about life. For example we are here in London, and I didn't have a great run yesterday, but it teaches me about life and help me be a better person. I had to smile today, because yesterday was yesterday, and the future is brighter. «

Harmony

» I am happy to hold this torch on behalf of World Harmony. Running coming here is a great thing, but the friendship that you make, the people you meet from different countries, learn about their different cultures. For me it has a special touch, because I was born in Africa, lived a couple of years in Italy and now I am in the States. I am a very international person and what could I better suit for this World Harmony Run. «

Education

» Be a good student, have a good family life, be good in academics and in athletics. What ever sport it is – hopefully it is running – enjoy it, have fun and it will be a wonderful life.

And for the students in schools work hard, do the best you can. That's what parents want from you, teachers want from you, that's what friends and family wants from you. They tell you this thing, because they care for you.

You got to work hard and be yourself! If it is a good thing, then do what others do, if it is a bad thing like drugs that's not you. Don't do it just because you are with friends, if you follow the right path with the right crowd, great things will happen in your life.

Be happy, do the best you can, maintain an excellent balance! You want to be successful, have a great time in life. But sometimes it doesn't sound too fun, but life is not always fun. «



Peter Gschwend

ZWEIFACHER SWISS-ALPINE SIEGER

Sport

» Wenn sich Menschen bewegen und sich sportlich fordern, dann werden sie offener. Es öffnen sich in ihnen verschiedene Türen. Es ist so wichtig, dass die verborgenen Dinge in uns zum Vorschein kommen. Das Bedürfnis zum Beispiel wieder mehr zur Natur zurückzukehren. Durch den Sport könne wir wieder mehr zur Natur zurückkehren. Und unsere Sinne stärken, welche wir sehr oft vergessen – bewusst wieder einen Duft riechen, einem Klang lauschen, bewusst etwas anschauen. Wenn wir das machen, sind wir flexibler, toleranter und anpassungsfähiger. Dies wiederum, so stelle ich fest, zieht andere Menschen an. Wenn ich diese Qualitäten weiter gebe, dann sehe ich wie auch meine Kollegen offener werden. Bei meinen Laufveranstaltungen «Run and Smile» kam kürzlich ein neuer Läufer hinzu. Er war sich auf der Fahrt nicht sicher, was er hier zu erwarten hatte, war fast etwas ängstlich. Es zeigte sich jedoch sehr schnell, dass er im Kreis der anderen Läufer aufgenommen wurde. So entstand ein schöner Kreis von Menschen, welche sich gemeinsam für eine Sache begeistern konnten. «

Harmony

» Am Weltfriedenslauf teilnehmen bedeutet für mich, wie ein Wassertröpflein gemeinsam mit vielen Freunden von einem Rinnsal zum Fluss, zum See und zum Meer zu werden. Ein Weltmeer positiver Gedanken und Lebensfreude – in innerster Überzeugung zum Weltfrieden. «

Education

» Sport sollte Spass machen, denn nur dann hat er einen positiven Effekt. «Run and Smile», dies ist meine Lebensphilosophie und nicht nur ein Slogan. Sport treiben und lächeln ist etwas das jeder Mensch kann. Leider tun es noch viel zu wenig Sporttreibende. Einige gute Beispiele gibt es aber schon – wie in einem Puzzlespiel. Die Kinder sind unsere Zukunft und daher sehr wichtig. Neben dem «gamen» am Computer oder Laptop sollte auch der Sport einen gewissen Teil einnehmen. Sport jeglicher Art kann Spass machen, fördern und formen. Leider legen viele Eltern wenig Gewicht dem Sport zu und damit werden dem Nachwuchs die vielen Vorteile nicht mehr weitergegeben. Sport als Vermittler für ein Miteinander, für Toleranz, Flexibilität und Anpassungsfähigkeit. Wenn sportliche Tätigkeit mit Menschen Spass macht werden Berührungsängste abgebaut und verschwinden. Der Sport und sein Umfeld kann auf natürliche Weise ein positives Umfeld kreieren das zudem nichts oder wenig kostet. «



Hendrick Ramaala

WINNER NEW YORK CITY MARATHON 2004

Sport

» I have been in this sport over 15 years now. And I have been running internationally since 1995. I tell you I have met so many nice people through this sport. In all my travels I made the best of friends with runners. Sport introduced me to the other side of the world. Nice people, all the nice things I have seen. I got all the nice things through sport. I am living well, because of the sports of athletics. I met with my partner through sport. Everything sport and athletics is just the best thing I have ever dreamt. «

Harmony

» Since I joined athletics it worked so well for me. In this sport of athletic as far as I am concerned, you have to love the sport. It is all about the love. Once you love the sport, you are giving it everything to push yourself to the limit. You are going to love this pain.

For me it is all about the love of the sport. I love this sport, I love this running business. Everything I do, I research, I read about it. You know, I live for the sport. I have a nice group at home. Young boys who come to help me everyday, motivate me. If you are my age and train with youngsters, you get motivated. You can't just lie down. You get up and you train harder. «

Education

» For me coaching myself works very well. You know, be your own boss. Trial and error. I have learned through trial and error. I know my feelings, I know how my body can respond to training sessions. Then I can always change little things here and there. So it is working very well. But the main thing is the love of the sport.

To the kids, get your education and then let's get out of drugs. Let's do the best thing for ourselves and for the family. Go to school and participate in sport and support our families and live well. All the negative things, let us avoid them. «



François Gay

MR. UNIVERSUM NATURAL AND MR. OLYMPIA NATURAL

Sport

» I believe that harmony within one self and with the rest of the world is a key factor for athletic success and a happy balanced life. It can make a difference between winning and losing. In life or within your chosen sport. «

Harmony

» It is a known fact that sport brings people together like music does for instance. The more people involved with it, the better the world will be! «

Education

» Sport gives the youth health, a positive attitude and teaches them to respect each other. Let's not forget: children are the future and will run this world tomorrow. «