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For Immediate Release

University of Michigan's Victor's Day Strengthens Ann Arbor Community

Over 25 Michigan Teams Connect With Children With Disabilities Through Sport

Ann Arbor, March 27, 2015 – Michigan student athletes participated in the annual Victor's Day at Oosterbaan Field House located on the University of Michigan's South Campus. Victor's Day allows Michigan athletics to connect with and give back to the community. From 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M., Michigan athletes gathered with members of the T. Wall Foundation and Best Buddies to teach and play with children and young adults with a physical or mental disability.

This year's Victor's Day was a huge success. In attendance were 23 University of Michigan varsity and club teams along with four Eastern Michigan University varsity teams. Emma Holloway, who is responsible for the University of Michigan's Best Buddies chapter, was the driving force behind the planning of Victor's Day. As her second year working on the event, Holloway has seen a substantial increase in participation. The 2015 Victor's Day event added six new teams and about 100 new participants with an intellectual or developmental disability.

Victor's Day is all about the kids. Distributed across Oosterbaan Field House was a swarm of children decked out in maize and blue along with multiple playing stations. Sports including soccer, volleyball, football, basketball, cheerleading, and even water polo were among a few of the stations for kids to stop in and play with the collegiate athletes. At each station the kids were able to learn from and spend quality time with Michigan athletes. In addition, the participants got an opportunity to win prizes and get their shirts signed by the athletes.

The participation in Victor's Day exemplifies Michigan's commitment to the community. The student athletes who participate in the Victor's Day event show the members of Best Buddies and the T. Wall Foundation that the athletes who come to Victor's Day do so to teach and play with children with disabilities.

According to Holloway, "Victor's Day is a great event because it is very much out of the public eye. This shows the participants from the T. Wall Foundation, their families, and everyone else involved that the athletes who come to Victor's Day do so because they want to spend time with the participants and share their sports -- it's not something they do for good press."

Sophomore and Michigan Varsity Water Polo Player Allison Larko attended Victor's Day for the second consecutive year and explains that her experience with community engagement at Michigan is a rewarding experience. Larko stated, "Victor's Day provides an intimate setting for us [the athletes] to connect with the community and provide them with the same support that they provide us."

Holloway explains that the main focus of a successful Victor's Day is for everyone to have fun. "We try to raise awareness of how rewarding and fun working with people with disabilities can be and hope that this experience leads some athletes to seek out more volunteering opportunities similar to Victor's Day" commented Holloway.

Some up and coming events similar to Victor's Day include a 5k run and friendship walk put on by Best Buddies on April 11 at Gallup Park. The 5k run will begin at 10 A.M. and the friendship walk will begin at noon. If interested in participating contact Emma Holloway at edhol@umich.edu or Sarika Gurnani, who can be reached at sgurnani@umich.edu.