



Champion Parent Focus: The Power of Team as Community

The kind of person we are stems largely from the relationships we live. Likewise, how much we are able to serve (influence/help) others depends upon our community. **Community is formed by relationships that bind us together in care and commitment to each other as persons.** Our family of origin is our first "community". As we age, we become members of other communities: a church, a workforce, a social network, a political party... For youth and adolescents, typically the first opportunity of community beyond family is a sport team.

Sport parents can help their young athletes be aware of the importance of the team community and help their kids become caring teammates. Parents can look to geese to understand the credo of "community."

Geese fly in a "V" formation. Science teaches us that, as each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in a "V" formation, the flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own. Teams who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and more easily because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it feels the drag of trying to go it alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front. Teams that function as a community quickly learn that they are stronger as a group and there is no "I" in "TEAM".



"Every team requires unity. A team has to move as one unit, one force. If the team doesn't do this, it goes down in defeat. You win or lose as a team, as a family."

~Jack Kemp, Football Player



Photos are teams from Play Like a Champion partner High School DePaul Catholic in New Jersey

When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back in the "V" and another goose flies point. Teams are more effective when the key positions can be filled by a number of players.

Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. Teams that encourage each other with positive words and mental support are more fun to be on and more effective in performance.

When a goose gets sick or is wounded and flies out of formation, two geese fall out with it and follow it down to help and protect it. Teammates can "have each others' back" and support each other through ups and downs; victory and defeat.

Team community is formed by relationships that bind us together in care and commitment to each other as teammates. Sport Parents remember the lesson of the geese in flight and help your children to be supportive, encouraging and unselfish on their sport team and in their play.