September Diversity Spotlight Recipient

On Saturday, August 11, the CUNY Athletic Conference continued to promote its groundbreaking Inclusive and Adaptive Sports initiative, collaborating with the prestigious Ryan Martin Foundation to host a one-of-a-kind Wheelchair Basketball Clinic at Hostos Community College.

The event brought in 120 attendees for a two-hour clinic, led by National Wheelchair Basketball and New York Rollin’ Knicks standout Ryan Martin. The clinic worked on passing, ball-handling skills, shooting, and was capped off by a segment of 5-on-5 wheelchair basketball games. "I thought it was a great kickoff event (for CUNY’s Inclusive Sports initiative). Hostos Community College was a great host," said Ryan Martin. "I love the turnout and the community support. Having a champion on campus and the community buy-in goes a long way for these type of events to turn into programs, as opposed to run-off events. I thought it was a great first step."

“Joining forces with Ryan Martin and his foundation is yet another step in our efforts at CUNY Athletics to get our students more involved in Inclusive and Adaptive sports,” stated CUNYAC Executive Director Zak Ivkovic. “It is no secret that we want to field our own intercollegiate wheelchair basketball team and working with the best (Ryan and his national championship-winning teammates from the Rollin’ Knicks) is the only way to serve our students and reach our dreams.”

The camp was a continual joint effort with the CUNY Central Office of Student Affairs, University Student Senate (USS) and CUNY Coalition for Students With Disabilities (CCSD) to promote their growing Inclusive and Adaptive Sports programming. "It was just a remarkable day. A day full of affirmation of the talent and ability of student-athletes with disabilities," said CUNY Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Christopher Rosa. "I think what we saw on the court was competition that was very fierce at a high level. It gave us a vision of what a commitment to inclusive athletics at CUNY could be."

Rosa also added: "I am grateful to our leaders at CUNYAC for creating this opportunity, and for our partners and the Ryan Martin Foundation in giving us the technical assistance and helping to hone our vision for what inclusive sports can be as an aspirational model here at CUNY."
"It was an amazing day. To have over 100 spectators bringing students with or without disabilities together to create an Inclusive day -- there is no better feeling," stated Raymond Perez, Director of the Accessibility Resource Center at Hostos. "This was one of many events that will hopefully lead to an inclusive athletics program here at CUNY. We were really happy to start it off at Hostos Community College."

Last March, the CUNYAC teamed up with the New York Rollin’ Knicks to host a successful wheelchair basketball tournament at LaGuardia Community College and unveiled its Inclusive and Adaptive Programming brochure in an effort to provide more opportunities for the disabled students in CUNY.