

# Engaging Your Community

Actively engaging our surrounding communities in campus life is a pillar of the Division II athletics experience.

For Division II, community engagement is about building lasting relationships. Our unique approach flips the paradigm by encouraging Division II athletics programs (and schools in general) to *become members of their communities* rather than merely asking their communities to support athletics. The DII brand of engagement enhances the community rather than simply benefitting the institution.

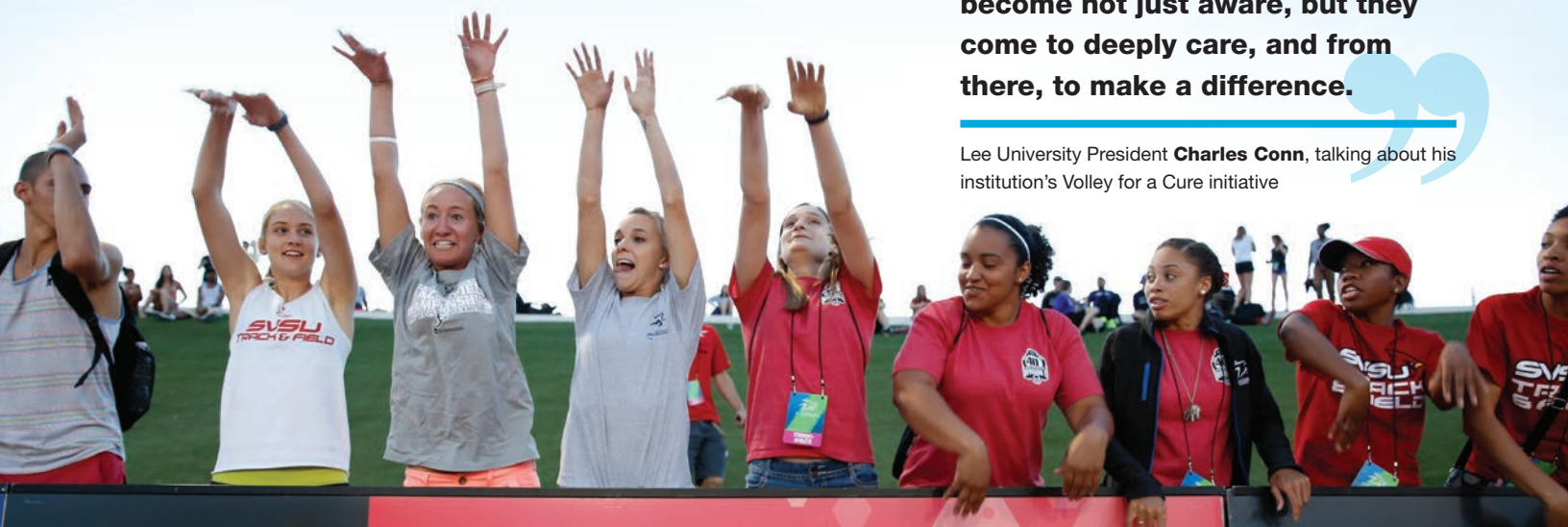
The payoff is that communities willingly support colleges and universities where effective outreach has occurred because they feel greater ownership. That translates to a stronger “town/gown” relationship, and greater community attendance at your athletics events!

- Division II conducts community engagement activities at each of its 25 national championships. Area youth and adults who interact with Division II teams during outreach events are then invited to attend the championship events, often through complimentary admission.
- Division II is nationally known for its long-standing commitment to the Make-A-Wish Foundation® and Team IMPACT®, both of which improve the lives of children with life-threatening illnesses. The Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee established the Make-A-Wish partnership in 2003 and has since raised more than \$5.3 million to benefit kids and granted more than 660 wishes.
- A major tenet of the Division II experience is the “game environment” initiative that helps institutions establish an atmosphere at home athletics contests that is both energetic and respectful. The initiative emphasizes family-friendly fun, with fans and participants conducting themselves in an inviting manner for all ages.



**The women on our volleyball team don't just raise awareness — they become acquainted with cancer patients, survivors and their children, they hear and repeat their stories, and in the process, their own lives are changed. They become not just aware, but they come to deeply care, and from there, to make a difference.**

Lee University President **Charles Conn**, talking about his institution's Volley for a Cure initiative







# The Military Matters

The military is a key partner that is often overlooked when it comes to community engagement. More than half of Division II colleges and universities are located within 50 miles of a military installation or base. Many others have a connection or partnership with the National Guard or other military branches, or have an active ROTC on campus. Almost all Division II schools have students who are either actively serving or are in the reserves.

It only makes sense to partner with military constituencies as an extension of Division II's community engagement philosophy. Division II athletics, higher education and the military share several attributes, from health and wellness and physical and mental toughness, to building and training future leaders.

Division II has created a resource to help schools either start or enhance those efforts. Download the brochure, titled **"Military Matters,"** at the "Division II Community Engagement" link on the DII homepage at [ncaa.org](http://ncaa.org).

## Question

**Do you include local military organizations in your community engagement strategies?**



## Conference Championship Stage

Division II also collaborated with the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference to provide a resource guide for institutions and conferences to use for their community engagement efforts. While the guide is specifically geared toward community engagement at conference tournaments, the tips and resources also apply to institutional events on campus.

For more information, or to download the brochure, titled **"Your Time To Shine,"** visit the "Division II Community Engagement" link on the DII homepage at [ncaa.org](http://ncaa.org).

## Question

**Division II launched in 2016 a community engagement tracking initiative with "Helper Helper," which is an app dedicated to student volunteers. Helper Helper eases the tracking burden on member institutions and creates a library of engagement activities and best practices for institutions to share. Are you aware of Helper Helper and the "help" it can provide?**

