

# Program offers busy athletes chance to serve

BY JIN NOH  
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With hours spent training, practicing, lifting and running, varsity student-athletes seldom have the time to go abroad or participate in civic engagement projects.

But five of them will have an opportunity to do so this summer through the Coach for College program.

The program—founded by former women's varsity tennis player Parker Goyer, Trinity '07—will launch its pilot program this summer in Vietnam.

Coach for College is a civic engagement curriculum designed exclusively for varsity student-athletes from both Duke and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In Vietnam, they will help build a multi-purpose court and run sports clinics for middle school students.

Goyer—who started the program as part of her fellowship with the Robertson Scholars Program—said she came up with the idea after trips to Vietnam and Belize last summer.

"When I was a student-athlete, I could never study abroad or do anything like DukeEngage because of my training schedule with tennis and balancing that with school work," she said. "As I talked to more athletes, I realized this was a problem a lot of them were facing."

Dean of Undergraduate Education Steve Nowicki served on the committee to select the participants for the program and helped secure \$60,000 to support it this summer. He said he supported Goyer's vision and believed the program has a very good chance of succeeding.

"We would like the DukeEngage kind of experience to be available to all Duke students," Nowicki said. "Providing athletes with this kind of opportunity has been a challenge, but this is a useful attempt to create that opportunity for athletes."

Unlike the eight- to 10-week time commitment for DukeEngage projects, Coach for College offers two three-week summer sessions. Five Duke and five UNC student-athletes have committed to each session for this summer.

Sophomore Ben Bubnovich, a member of the men's



SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Duke and UNC student-athletes will go to Vietnam this summer to build an athletic facility and run a clinic as part of Coach for College's pilot program.

track and field team, said the program was appealing because it provides a chance to experience and see the world through a totally different lens.

Through the sports clinics, Goyer said she hopes to instill values like perseverance, dedication and cooperation, which she said are useful in other areas such as education.

Freshman Nick Tsipis, a member of the men's soccer team who went on the planning trip, said student-athletes provide a rare range of talents that can benefit the Vietnamese children.

"We can inspire these kids to go to college because of our

unique combination as a highly skilled sports player and as a student at a top university," Tsipis said. "This is an opportunity to give back using our talents."

Despite the language barrier, Goyer said she has no major concerns that the difference in languages will affect the ultimate impact of Coach for College.

"You can do a lot of things, such as demonstrating, which do not require many words," Goyer said. "The other thing is that in many ways sports help transcend the language barrier because everyone has a passion for sports no matter what country you come from."