Champions Committed to Kids Senior Sem Presentation Outline

**Attention Getter:** 200 million children worldwide are dealing with some form of disability.

Obviously, as college athletes, none of you are afflicted with seriously mental or physical disabilities. As a member of the \_\_\_\_ team here at Drury, you play a bigger role than you might think. Whether you’re the star of the team or not, your involvement in the game is an inspiration to many that lack the ability to do what you do every day. But what does this have to do with those kids and their disabilities?

If you really don’t know why you’re here today, I guess I should be the one to tell you. I’m here to talk to you about Champions Committed to Kids, a Springfield organization that gives kids age 5-18 that are fighting disability or chronic illness a chance to be a part of an athletic team. Champions Committed to Kids has partnered with Cox Health and Mercy to take children with medical conditions and disabilities and place them with local athletic programs. My freshman year, the swim team adopted a 9 year old boy named Thomas who has Muscular Dystrophy. He came to all of our home meets and was generally in a good mood, although he got a little bored sometimes. Come on, it’s swimming, and he was 9 at the time.

Champions Committed to Kids was formed with one purpose: to provide kids who are fighting a serious illness the opportunity to be a part of an athletic team while building lifelong friendships. Kids age 5-18 are given the chance to forget about their daily challenges while focusing on the game and excitement of a sports atmosphere. The kids are encouraged to come to your team’s practices and games, and that’s great. But there are other opportunities to hang out with your kid that are just as fun. For example, Thomas was involved in Miracle League Baseball for a while. He hates baseball, though, so we would stick around for an inning or two and then go get ice cream with him, his parents, and his brother, Enoch. Times like these are where I really felt like I was establishing a connection with Thomas. It wasn’t when he was watching me swim or anything like that; it was when we were just sitting around telling jokes or talking about video games. It was just nice for both of us to know that everything was alright, for a little while, at least. Champions Committed to Kids gives hope and inspiration to the kids and parents involved. Athletes and coaches witness the increase in self-esteem and self-confidence in these kids and the compassion of the athletes. The transformation of the kids is inspiring to everyone around them.

Everyone involved with the organization is learning life lessons, inspiring each other, providing hope, building character, empowering one another, and developing lifelong friendships with someone who might not have a lot else to look forward to. If that’s not reason enough for you to want to sign up, your SAAC representatives will be happy to know that Champions Committed to Kids also counts as your team’s “community engagement” that is required as part of the GLVC SAAC Challenge. Doesn’t this sound like a little more fun than your typical volunteer work?

That’s all I’ve got for today, I hope you guys learned a little bit today and are interested in joining this awesome program. If you have any questions, feel free to speak up, or you can call me whenever something comes up. My contact information is on the handout you’ve got, along with Allyson Tuckness’s number and email. She’s the executive director of Champions Committed to Kids, and I’ll put you guys in touch with her if you decide you want to get involved. Thanks again for letting me talk to you about this organization.