



MEDIA RELEASE

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LIONS CLUB INTERNATIONAL VISITS FORT WAYNE AND TURNSTONE TO LEARN ABOUT THE SPORT OF GOALBALL

FORT WAYNE, IN (*April 27, 2018*) – Members of Lions Club International, including the organization’s President, Dr. Naresh Aggarwal, and his wife, Navita Aggarwal, both from India, recently visited Turnstone. Representatives were in the area for the 2018 Indiana State Lions Convention in Muncie, joined Past Lions Club International President Wayne Madden, Past Director Dave Fiandt, International Director Nick Xinopoulos, and Past International Director Linda Tincher for a tour of the facilities.

Lions Club International and Indiana Lions have been instrumental in the establishment and development of the Goalball Center of Excellence at Turnstone. In 2015, Turnstone entered into an agreement with the United States Association of Blind Athletes, the Paralympic sport’s national governing body for goalball, to establish the first-ever long-term U.S. goalball resident program for elite athletes training full-time in Fort Wayne. The Lions Club International Foundation previously contributed \$100,000 and Lions of District 25B and Lions of Indiana, \$16,653, to the resident houses that would make this program a reality.

“It was an honor to host Dr. Aggarwal and the Lions Club International members,” said Mike Mushett, CEO of Turnstone. “Turnstone is proud to provide many of the opportunities Lions Club has helped make possible for goalball athletes in Fort Wayne and across the United States, and we appreciate their long history of supporting individuals with visual impairments worldwide.”

The group met with Mushett and Turnstone representatives for a tour of the Plassman Athletic Center and continued to the Goalball Center of Excellence where they were introduced to members of the U.S. Men’s and Women’s Goalball Teams and Coaches.

After introductions and a brief overview of the Paralympic sport of goalball, the goalball athletes, including several 2016 Paralympic medalists, took the court for a scrimmage. Following the scrimmage, the Lions mingled with athletes and coaching staff, asking questions and congratulating the athletes on their successes so far.

“This has been a very touching and interesting experience,” said Dr. Naresh Aggarwal. “I had never heard of the sport of goalball before this demonstration. It is very uncommon in India.”

Lions were also invited to visit the resident homes - which they made a reality with their financial support. U.S. Women's Goalball Team athletes and coaches gave the tour. When the first home was finished, selected male athletes from across the country moved to Fort Wayne in October 2015. Upon completion of the second resident home, selected female athletes moved to Fort Wayne and began training at the Goalball Center of Excellence in January 2018.

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ABOUT TURNSTONE: Now in its 75th year of service, Turnstone's mission is to empower people with disabilities to achieve their highest potential by providing the one of the most comprehensive offerings of services and programs to people with disabilities and their families under one roof in the United States. Thanks to generous support and compassionate staff, Turnstone's legacy of advocacy and innovation continues to contribute to a world that accepts and values people based on their abilities.

CUTLINE: Lions Club International members visited Turnstone and the Goalball Center of Excellence to see firsthand how their global support of individuals with visual impairments has helped make the U.S. Men's & Women's Goalball residency program in Fort Wayne, IN a success.