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## SPORTS MUSEUM LAUNCHES “STAND STRONG”

### *Character Building Program Teaches Youth Life Lessons Through Sports History*

**BOSTON, MA** - The Sports Museum announced today the launch of *Stand Strong: A Character Building Program for Young People*, a new program designed for at-risk middle school students from Charlestown and other communities in the Greater Boston Area.

“Kids today have to face drugs, violence, and a whole host of challenges,” said Rusty Sullivan, the Executive Director of The Sports Museum. “That’s why we developed *Stand Strong* – to help them build the type of character that will help them stand up to these challenges.”

Over the past several weeks, The Sports Museum has started to deliver the pilot version of *Stand Strong* to 30 middle school students hailing from the Edwards Middle School in Charlestown and the MissionSAFE afterschool program in Charlestown. Over the course of the next three months, participating students will experience an integrated series of 13 modules involving a video presentation, museum activities, school sessions, field trips to Fenway Park and other venues, and a community service project.

The Sports Museum developed the *Stand Strong* curriculum in conjunction with experts at Boston University's Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character. “The program is designed to help students develop teamwork, determination, responsibility, courage, and other positive character traits,” said Michelle Gormley, the Manager of Public Programs and Education for The Sports Museum. “Sports provides us with a powerful platform to help teach all of this because it’s something that really resonates with kids.”

Among the many athletes featured in the *Stand Strong* curriculum include **Jason Varitek** of the Boston Red Sox, **Troy Brown** of the New England Patriots, **Cedric Maxwell** of the Boston Celtics, **Ray Bourque** of the Boston Bruins, and other legends of Boston sport. The program links these athletes and their stories to real life challenges that youth at risk face on an everyday basis.

“Sports is all about character,” said Sullivan. “And The Sports Museum is all about using sports to help at risk kids build character. *Stand Strong* is an important step in this regard – and one that will hopefully help kids make the right choices in the face of drugs, violence, and other challenges.”

Sean & Lisa McGrath and The Highland Street Foundation, The Amelia Peabody Foundation, Macy’s Foundation, The Sean McDonough Charitable Foundation, The Sovereign Bank Foundation, and The Fuller Foundation, Inc. are some of the key individuals and organizations who are supporting The Sports Museum by funding *Stand Strong*.

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The Sports Museum is a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational institution that has served Boston and New England for the last 30 years. Located on Levels 5 and 6 of the TD Banknorth Garden, The Sports Museum preserves and showcases the distinctly rich sports heritage of New England through an unparalleled collection of artifacts, multi-media, works of art, and interactive exhibits – and uses all of that to help build character and teach the values of leadership, respect, and cooperation to our youth.