

2023

IMPACT REPORT

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Community,

As the President of The Army of Survivors, I take great pride in sharing the remarkable progress we have made and the significant impact we have had on countless lives.

Over the past year, our organization has remained unwavering in our commitment to advocacy, education, and providing resources. Thanks to the generous support of individuals like you, we have successfully championed multiple bills at both the state and federal levels. Notably, these include Michigan House Bill 4120-4125 and the ALERT Act. These crucial laws have extended the timeframe for athlete-survivors to take legal action against their abusers. Additionally, they have established mandatory standards for university administrators to promptly address cases of sexual abuse involving staff members.

I am thrilled to announce the successful development of our Compassionate Coach™ program. This innovative initiative educates coaches on trauma awareness, its impact on athletes and children, recognizing its signs, and adapting coaching techniques accordingly. By integrating trauma-informed practices into coaching methodologies, our ultimate objective is to foster an inclusive and empathetic sports environment that prioritizes the well-being and mental health of every participant.

Our website has evolved into a robust resource for athletes and survivors alike. Throughout this year, we have released several impactful position statements, amplifying the voices of athletes and those with lived experiences of abuse while raising awareness about the prevalence of abuse in sports. Our dedicated team is deeply committed to ensuring that vital information is easily accessible to those in need, and we will continue to make significant advancements in this endeavor.

As an organization founded, led, and centered around athlete-survivors, we remain committed to prioritizing these values as we work toward change. Together, we can cultivate a positive cultural shift, and it is an immense honor to have your support in this mission.

This past year has been truly remarkable for our organization, and we wholeheartedly look forward to your ongoing support as we advance toward our ultimate goal of creating a safer world for all athletes. Thank you for your unwavering dedication and commitment to our cause. Together, we continue to work towards a safer and more just future.

Grace French

Founder & President, The Army of Survivors

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Valued TAOS Community,

As we stepped into the new year, I found myself reflecting on not only what we have achieved in 2023 but also on what we have yet to accomplish.

I am proud to recount one notable achievement that illustrates our commitment to promoting athlete and athlete-survivor welfare while centering athlete and athlete-survivors' voices - the creation and support of the Ad-hoc Survivor Advisory Group (ASAG), formed to provide guidance on the formation of an International Safe Sport Entity. Through the ASAG, The Army of Survivors worked with athlete survivors worldwide, representing various sports and diverse experiences with abuse. Their invaluable feedback and guidance played a crucial role in creating recommendations of best practices for the creation of safe sport entities.

Anne Tiivas, esteemed colleague and co-founder of SafeSport International, shared something that has stuck with me for a couple of years now, and I believe it applies to the entirety of TAOS' global support network: we are united in our belief that we can make sport a safer, enjoyable and inclusive environment for all children, young people, and adult athletes - regardless of their level of participation and in whatever context they participate.

The road ahead is one of promise and potential. As we continue to embrace new challenges and opportunities, we extend our deepest gratitude for your partnership in making the sports world a safer place for all athletes. With your continued commitment, we are poised to expand our impact, bring about more groundbreaking changes, and continue our pursuit of a sporting world where every athlete is valued, supported, and safe. Thank you for being an integral part of this journey, for standing with us, and for believing in a future where the dignity and safety of every athlete is a given, not a goal.

Julie Ann Rivers-Cochran, MSW

Executive Director, The Army of Survivors

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



GRACE FRENCH (SHE/HER)

PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER

Grace French is a dance teacher and coach at two nationally recognized studios in Canton and Fenton, Michigan. A nationally recognized advocate for athlete rights, Grace is one of the recipients of the Arthur Ashe Courage Award at the 2018 ESPYs, as well as a 2018 Glamour Women of the Year awardee. In 2021, she received the Liberty Bell award from the Ingham County Bar Association, and in 2022, she received the Liberty Bell award from the State Bar of Michigan. Grace received her BBA at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Dr. Danielle Moore (she/her)

Vice President

Dr. Danielle Moore is an adjunct professor at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology. She currently teaches in the Criminology B.A./ Forensic Psychology M.A. programs. She completed her Doctorate in Clinical and Forensic Psychology at the Illinois School of Professional Psychology, Master's degrees in Clinical Psychology at ISPP, Master's degree in Forensic Psychology at the University of North Dakota, and undergraduate degree in psychology at Central Michigan University. Dr. Moore has received The Foundation for Global Sports Development's 2018 Humanitarian Award, the 2018 Arthur Ashe Courage, and the 2018 Glamour Women of the Year Award.



Mary Cain (she/her)

Board Director

Mary Cain is the founder of the nonprofit and professional running team, Atalanta NYC. Atalanta NYC employs professional female runners to serve as mentors for young girls while building both their career skills and training full-time. After sharing her story with the world in a 2019 NY Times Op-Ed, Mary has dedicated her career to driving change in sport, with an emphasis on athlete well-being and gender equity.



Dwight Hicks (he/him)

Board Director

Dwight Hicks is a former professional football player, winning two Super Bowls (1981, 1984) with the San Francisco 49ers and appearing in four consecutive Pro Bowls (1981-84). Hicks also competed at the University of Michigan, where he received All-Big Ten Conference recognition and All-American Honors. Hicks now works in the entertainment industry and does motivational speaking engagements.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Alexander S. Rusek (he/him)

Board Director

Alexander S. Rusek is an attorney with Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith, PC in Lansing, Michigan. The practice focuses on complex mass and class action civil litigation, business law & litigation, criminal law, and appellate law. He has represented established businesses, new businesses, non-profits, professionals, and individuals involved in multi-party, mass, and class action litigation. Alex is a graduate of Oakland University and Michigan State University College of Law, cum laude.



Devi Jags (she/her)

Board Director

Devi Jags is an Entrepreneur, Writer, and Activist. She is co-founder of an Indian food brand called Sambar Kitchen, and her work can be seen through her endeavors, such as Chatty Monks Brewing, The Sparkle Community, and much more. Devi holds an MFA in Creative Nonfiction Writing from Sarah Lawrence College and has been published in The Washington Post, Vogue India, Teen Vogue, Women's Health, Bon Appétit, and more. She was a 2023 Winter Resident of the Tin House Publishers Workshop and has been interviewed by The Washington Post, Unit3d Podcast, and Newsy for her advocacy work in Title IX and sexual violence prevention.



Janelle Hill (she/her)

Board Secretary

Janelle Hill, APRN, PMHNP-BC, is a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner. She is the owner/founder of Refuge Mental Health Services and has over 12 years of experience in psychiatry. Janelle obtained her Bachelor's Degree of Science in Nursing from the College of Saint Mary in 2012 and her Master's Degree in Science from the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) in 2016. Janelle served as the legislative liaison for UNMC during her college career and has remained involved and an avid advocate against sexual abuse and violence on the local and national levels since that time.

TAOS STAFF



Julie Ann Rivers-Cochran
(she/her)

Executive Director

Julie Ann Rivers-Cochran, MSW, is an international leader in the field of the prevention of abuse in sports. Over 20 years ago, she began her career in the movement to end gender-based violence by providing direct services and advocacy for survivors. As a survivor of childhood trauma, Julie Ann is a fierce advocate whose personal experience with the impact of sexual assault and domestic violence has translated into a lifelong goal of listening to and then advocating for survivors while holding perpetrators and the systems that support them accountable.



Phoebe Unruh (she/her)

**Director of Marketing and
Communications**

Phoebe Unruh joined The Army of Survivors in 2023 and oversees its marketing and communications strategies, as well as helps to develop and implement initiatives that increase the organization's visibility. Unruh is a graduate of Boise State University with a degree in Communications.



Kacey Long (she/her)

Director of Programs

Kacey Long, MSW, has worked in the field of sexual violence since 2012 at sexual assault centers, research institutions, state agencies, and within the child welfare system. Long, who is in her second year with The Army of Survivors, develops and implements programming that aligns with TAOS' strategic priorities.

TAOS STAFF



Dominique Davis (She/Her)

Executive Assistant

Dominique Davis is the Executive Assistant for TAOS. Her goal is to support the team by ensuring the day-to-day operations run as efficiently as possible. Davis graduated from the University of Missouri-Columbia with a degree in Exercise Physiology and Nutrition and finished her 200HR yoga teacher training in Atlanta in 2018. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Southeastern Climbers Coalition and chairs their Equitable Access Committee.

INTRODUCTION

THE ARMY OF SURVIVORS (TAOS) SERVES AS A GLOBAL LEADER IN ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT FOR ATHLETE SURVIVORS WHO HAVE ENDURED SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND ABUSE IN SPORTS. WE EMPHASIZE THE CRUCIAL NEED TO RECOGNIZE THE RIGHTS OF THESE ATHLETE-SURVIVORS, ENSURING THEIR VOICES ARE HEARD AND ASSERTING THAT ALL ATHLETES SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN SPORTS WITHOUT THE LOOMING FEAR OF HARM.

Established in 2018 by survivors who experienced sexual abuse by the now defamed and imprisoned former USA Gymnastics sports medicine physician, enabled by Michigan State University, USA Gymnastics, the U.S. Olympic Committee, and the F.B.I., we continue to be athlete survivor-led and centered. Our community comprises of advocates, athletes, and athlete-survivors from diverse backgrounds, drawing strength from our unique history. This distinctive foundation enables TAOS to prioritize lived experiences, placing survivors at the forefront of our efforts to raise awareness and instigate change.

Our mission extends beyond individual stories; we work tirelessly to enhance public awareness surrounding sexual violence and other forms of abuse against athletes at every level. This involves fostering accountability not only for perpetrators but also for the organizations and institutions that enable them. Additionally, we strive to amplify transparency by fostering a culture where survivors and whistleblowers feel empowered to report abuse, should they choose to do so. TAOS remains dedicated to reshaping the narrative, challenging existing norms, and advocating for a future where sports are characterized by safety, respect, and justice for all athletes.

MISSION

TAOS' mission is to bring awareness, accountability, and transparency to sexual abuse against athletes at all levels, from elite to non-elite, since the culture of sports that tacitly supports sexual abuse against athletes does not discriminate based on an athlete's ability.

Our work is athlete survivor-founded, survivor-led, and trauma-informed, and we carry out our work through three pillars that support TAOS' mission: education, resources, and advocacy.

ADVOCACY

ADVOCACY



Legislative Action

TAOS saw continued progress with its policy efforts in 2023, both on the federal and state levels. In collaboration with coalition partners, TAOS saw the passage of several significant bills designed to support survivors into law.

On the state level, TAOS saw the passage of Michigan House Bill 4120-4125 on June 29, 2023. TAOS Founder and President Grace French was asked to join Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer for the official signing of the bill. The bill extends the time that litigation can be made against an abuser for survivors of childhood sexual assault and violence. Previously, the cutoff for filing a lawsuit in the State of Michigan for abuse that occurred as a child was a maximum of the age of 28 - a standard set following the conviction of Larry Nassar. The new legislation extends the maximum age to 52. The six-bill package also creates training material for mandatory reporters who are required to report cases of suspected assault, protect individuals and whistleblowers from retaliation for reporting a case of sexual assault, and make it a crime to purposefully use authority to coerce someone into not reporting a crime.

On the federal level, TAOS saw the introduction of the ALERT Act (Accountability of Leaders in Education to Report Title IX Investigations Act) to hold universities accountable for sexual abuse by requiring university leaders to certify if they have received any reports of sexual abuse perpetrated by university employees. TAOS supported this legislation in 2022, and the bill was officially introduced in the Senate in July 2023 and is currently being held in committee.

Advocating for Changes in Systems

TAOS worked with policymakers on the "Safer Sports for Athletes Act of 2023," which will reform the U.S. Center for SafeSport (SafeSport) through key revisions that will improve the process for athlete-survivors, ensure national governing bodies can take action to keep abusers out of sports when SafeSport fails to act and revise training guidelines. Specifically, informed by athlete and athlete-survivor voices, the legislation would:

- Improve SafeSport's investigative process;
- Ensure the investigation process is trauma-informed;
- Allow national governing bodies (NGBs) to take action against individuals for abuse, change sports culture, and prioritize abuse prevention.

Following the initiation of the SafeSport reform efforts by TAOS, the USOPC Commission on the State of the U.S. Olympics and Paralympics undertook a significant step by appointing an Executive Director. This appointment marked the commencement of a thorough evaluation of the USOPC's existing measures for athlete protection. The Commission extended an invitation to TAOS to participate in their Public Hearing titled "Protecting the Safety of Movement Participants Session," which took place on September 6, 2023. During this session, TAOS' Co-founder and Board President, Grace French, bravely shared her testimony, sharing the impact of SafeSport's process on athlete-survivors as well as the issues and concerns TAOS has been hearing from athletes and those with lived experience of abuse in sport.

ADVOCACY



ADVOCACY

Advocating for Changes in Systems

In April 2023, during a meeting with the Bipartisan Task Force to End Sexual Violence, members of TAOS, including TAOS Founder and Board President Grace French and TAOS Executive Director Julie Ann Rivers-Cochran, joined forces with advocates from the Keep Kids Safe Movement and other allied organizations to discuss the impact of sexual abuse in children and adolescents. This gathering marked the first-ever Keep Kids Safe Capitol Hill Day of Action in Washington, D.C. Throughout the advocacy event, survivors and athlete-survivors of sexual abuse and their allies came together to urge the White House and Congress members to prioritize healing and justice in addressing this critical issue while also implementing policies to protect children and prevent sexual abuse. TAOS also supported the Keep Kids Safe Movement in their introduction of the Keep Kids Safe National Blueprint, which serves as a roadmap of steps the U.S. government can take to prevent child sexual abuse on the national level.

On October 25, 2023, TAOS's Director of Programs, Kacey Long, and Board Director, Mary Cain, took significant steps in advocating for athlete safety by engaging with influential political figures to educate and build awareness about the issue of abuse in sports. Their efforts led them to discussions with the House Judiciary Majority, where they received encouraging feedback and support. TAOS is optimistic about the introduction of the Safer Sports for Athletes Act in 2024, recognizing its potential to catalyze change and enhance safety protocols for athletes in all sports. This initiative underscores TAOS' commitment to advocacy as a key strategy in its broader mission to protect athletes and foster safer sporting environments.



ADVOCACY

IN THE PAST YEAR, TAOS RALLIED ON BEHALF OF ATHLETES TO AMPLIFY THE VOICES OF ATHLETES THROUGH VARIOUS INITIATIVES, SUCH AS CRAFTING POSITION STATEMENTS SHARED BY TAOS AND ALLIED ORGANIZATIONS WORLDWIDE.

THIS YEAR'S POSITION STATEMENTS INCLUDED:

Individual Activism & Advocacy

08/09/23

The Army of Survivors Commends Courageous Athlete Survivors Amid Mistrial Verdict in the Criminal Trial Against Former SJSU Athletic Trainer.

09/06/23

TAOS Extends Support to Jenni Hermoso, Spain's Women's National Football Team

09/12/23

The Army of Survivors Demands Accountability Amidst Disturbing Allegations Against Michigan State University's Head Football Coach

ADVOCACY



International Reach

In 2023, TAOS embarked on a six-month initiative with FIFA to safely engage a diverse group of athlete survivors worldwide that offered feedback and opinions about the creation of an International Safe Sport Entity (the Entity). For safe sport entities to succeed, athletes and athlete-survivors with lived experience of abuse in sport must be at the center of all planning, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation. Therefore, TAOS and other allies advocated for athlete and athlete-survivor voices to be embedded in the entity at the start of its creation. Safe Sport entities must value and embed survivor voice during and throughout its creation and implementation and must recognize the need for support in ensuring this happens in a trauma-informed way. TAOS organized the Athlete Survivor Advisory Group (ASAG) for the exploration into the Entity and advocated that each member be compensated, which they were. This was a huge success as, up until this point, no survivor groups were compensated to this degree within a sports context. ASAG members were provided free access to mental health and peer support services following meetings and when engaging in other project activities, such as reviewing recommendations. The project concluded with a final report of recommendations based on the learnings from the ASAG. Paramount in the recommendations was the continual need to include survivor voices, prioritize transparency of process, and promote trauma-informed strategies across the development of any type of safe sport entity.

International Partnerships

As an active and engaged member of the Sport and Rights Alliance, TAOS continues to contribute through monthly meetings and ongoing activism and advocacy. TAOS was also invited to join the Global Network of Athletes Steering Group. Mary Cain, athlete-survivor and TAOS Board Director, is serving on the group as they develop the group's strategic plan.

In its commitment to athlete safety, TAOS also holds a significant position on the Academic Advisory Board for the International Olympic Committee's "Safeguarding Officer in Sports Certificate." This five-month certification course was crafted to resonate with global initiatives working to safeguard athletes, ensuring that sports policies and programs are aligned with the United Nations' 2030 agenda.

Further extending its influence, TAOS is involved with the steering committee of the Brave Movement, a worldwide network uniting survivors and their supporters to participate and collaborate on impactful advocacy projects and campaigns that work at eradicating childhood sexual violence.

TAOS' commitment to safe sports extends to its membership on the Advisory Board and the Annual Conference Committee for Safe Sport International, a global organization dedicated to the creation and implementation of athlete-safeguarding practices and safe sport frameworks. Julie Ann Rivers-Cochran, serving as the Chair of the Athlete Advisory Group, underscores the organization's dedication to fostering athlete-safeguarding practices and frameworks worldwide.

As part of the WeProtect Global Alliance, TAOS continues its mission to protect children in the digital age from sexual exploitation and abuse, demonstrating its dedication to creating safer online environments.

ADVOCACY



International Partnerships

Moreover, TAOS's involvement in the Advisory Committee for the International Safeguards for Children in Sport highlights its integral role in advocating for the safety of young athletes. By prioritizing the input of athlete-survivors with firsthand experience of abuse, TAOS helps shape a strategic vision that focuses on establishing a secure sporting environment. The organization's efforts contribute to a global alliance that not only raises awareness but also assists sports organizations in implementing foundational safeguarding frameworks.

Finally, in a groundbreaking alliance to ensure the 2026 World Cup is a beacon of human rights and safety, TAOS joined Dignity 2026, a diverse coalition of civil society organizations with a distinguished history of advocating for robust human rights standards. This collaboration represents a concerted effort to leverage the global stage of the World Cup to promote safety, inclusion, and dignity in sports, extending beyond the playing fields to the cities hosting the 2026 tournament.

ADVOCACY



***EDUCATION +
RESOURCES***

Compassionate Coach™ - Trauma-Informed Training for Coaches

TAOS designed and developed the innovative Compassionate Coach™ program with athletes, athlete-survivors of abuse, and leading experts in trauma-informed care, institutional courage, and player-centered coaching. In 2023, TAOS completed the program, which helps coaches understand how to create a trauma-informed environment and support survivors of abuse. This 8-week virtual interactive course educates coaches on understanding trauma, how it affects child athletes, how to recognize it, and how to appropriately adjust their coaching style to create a safe and secure sporting environment. By coaching in a trauma-informed way, coaches have the opportunity to provide a safe and secure environment for athletes who have experienced trauma with the goal of continuing training without the risk of re-traumatization. Upon completion of the program, coaches will be able to more easily identify athletes who may have experienced trauma and understand how to respond if they see abuse themselves.

The program guides participants through eight modules: Compassionate Coach™ Overview; Developmentally Appropriate Coaching; Trauma 101; Dismantling Myths about Survivors; Trauma-informed Responses and Upstander Intervention; Institutional Betrayal, Cowardice & Courage and Your Role as Institutional Representative; Creating a Compassionate Culture; and Looking Forward. Together, these modules provide a robust foundation for a wide range of learning objectives. These include articulating a scientific understanding of trauma's immediate and lasting impacts and identifying ways to use one's privilege for progress. The program culminates in a comprehensive educational experience that equips graduates with the skills, knowledge, and tools necessary to foster safe, inclusive, and trauma-informed sporting environments for the athletes they serve.

Compassionate Coach™ - Trauma-Informed Training for Coaches

The Compassionate Coach pilot launched in January 2024, and we extend our gratitude to Dr. Thomas Gusky, Ashleigh Anderson, Kathy Becker Blease, Jennifer M. Gomez, Ph.D., Kelly Gee, Jean-Paul Richard, Grace French, Dr. Danielle Moore, Dwight Hicks, Fran Waters, DCSW, LMSW, LMFT, Desire Vincent Levy, John-Michael Landers and previous MSW Interns, Shelby Lopez, MSW, Moriah Freed, MSW, and Olivia Nicholas, MSW for their contributions to the development of the Compassionate Coach™ curriculum.



WHAT IS A COMPASSIONATE COACH?

SOMEONE WHO IS:

PARTICIPATORY

RESPECTFUL

TRANSPARENT

RELIABLE

COURAGEOUS

VULNERABLE

FORGIVING

Training & Technical Assistance

In October 2023, TAOS was awarded a training and technical assistance grant through the Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women. This two-year initiative allows TAOS to provide ongoing training and technical assistance to the wide variety of OVW grantees and their subcontractors. The grant includes listening sessions, a survey of grantees to help guide upcoming educational opportunities, a webinar series, toolkit development, and white paper. The funding also supports TAOS' participation in national conferences to share best practices on how to work with athletes with lived experience of abuse.



RESOURCES + PROGRAMS

Survivor Advocacy Training

TAOS created a four-part virtual training titled "Trauma-Informed Survivor Advocacy." The pilot, created for athletes and athlete survivors, was held in 2022, and adaptations were made in 2023 to enhance the learning experience. It was also branded and professionally designed. TAOS plans to open the training to new participants in the Spring of 2024, including non-athletes. The training was so well received that allied organizations with similar missions reached out to ask TAOS to conduct the training with their staff and those they serve. Adaptations to do so are underway.

Abuse in Sports Resources

TAOS continued to create resources on abuse in sports, tailored to meet athlete and athlete-survivor needs:

- Updated version of TAOS' "Abuse in Sports" resource.
- "Appropriate Athlete-Coach Relationships"
- "Barriers to Reporting Abuse in Sports"
- "Disclosing Abuse in Sports"
- "Trauma-informed Environment in Sports"
- "What to Do if You Suspect Abuse or Neglect"

Collaboration with Universities

In 2023, four Master of Social Work (MSW) students from the University of Georgia undertook their fall semester internship with TAOS, demonstrating the integral role internships play in the organization's mission. These students immersed themselves in a range of projects across programmatic, marketing, and communications areas, actively collaborating with TAOS staff. This engagement was a testament to how TAOS values the fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and latest academic insights brought by interns. Their contributions not only enhanced TAOS' initiatives, but also underscored the importance of integrating academic learning with real-world application to advance the cause of preventing abuse in sports.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

In 2023, TAOS participated in numerous events, conferences, and summits as keynote speakers, panelists, and moderators, advocating for the prevention of abuse and sexual harassment in sports. Through these events, members of TAOS encouraged the adoption of trauma-informed practices within sports organizations and institutions and championed a sporting culture that prioritizes athlete well-being over financial gains and medals. These events also served as a crucial space for TAOS to continue its collaborations and partnerships with allied organizations, furthering its mission to enhance safety in sports through its core pillars of education and advocacy.



2023 KEY EVENTS

Converse University:

In October of 2023, TAOS' Vice President, Dr. Danielle Moore, spoke to students of Converse University at a one-hour NCAA-required event with the purpose of creating awareness around the prevalence and complexities surrounding sexual abuse and harassment within athletics. Specifically, Dr. Moore educated students on the "Abuse in Sport: Power and Control Wheel," which shows the ways abusers use power to gain and maintain control over athletes, as well as the process of healing and its nonlinear nature.

2023 U.S. Soccer Foundation Playmakers' Summit:

In 2023, TAOS' Executive Director, Julie Ann Rivers-Cochran, MSW, served on the Participant Safety Panel at the U.S. Soccer Foundation Playmakers' Summit alongside notable figures such as former United States Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates, Sinead Farrelly, and Mana Shim. This panel was established in response to U.S. Soccer's commitment to addressing safety concerns, which was prompted by an independent investigation into coaching abuse in women's professional soccer conducted by Sally Yates in 2022. The panelists discussed the impact of abuse and focused on current initiatives that work to prevent misconduct within sports. Ms. Rivers-Cochran specifically addressed the unique power dynamics and vulnerabilities in sports that may increase the risk of sexual abuse while underscoring the importance for sports organizations and those associated with athletes to understand these dynamics and foster institutional courage, highlighting these as crucial first steps for preventing abuse in sports.

FIFA's Inaugural Safeguarding Summit:

In October of 2023, TAOS' Executive Director, Julie Ann Rivers-Cochran, attended the first-ever FIFA Inaugural Safeguarding Summit in Zurich, Switzerland. The Summit was organized as FIFA continues its ongoing work through its FIFA Guardians program, which seeks to promote children's well-being in football and develop a comprehensive approach to safeguarding best practices throughout the game. Ms. Rivers-Cochran served as a moderator for a panel with athlete-survivors of abuse in sport where the discussion focused on exploring the importance of sports organizations creating a culture of safeguarding where all levels of the organization center athletes and their well-being. Panelists shared their personal perspectives on what safeguarding looks like from the lens of athletes with lived experiences of the abuse.

2023 KEY EVENTS

2023 Safe Sport International Conference:

In September 2023, TAOS Vice President Dr. Danielle Moore, Board Director Mary Cain, Executive Director Julie Ann Rivers-Cochran, and Director of Marketing and Communications Phoebe Unruh attended the Safe Sport International Conference in London. They collaborated with global leaders in a shared mission to prevent abuse in sports and to raise awareness about systemic issues embedded in sports culture. Dr. Moore and Ms. Rivers-Cochran conducted a workshop on trauma-informed coaching. During the session, they introduced TAOS' Compassionate Coach™ program and discussed the prevalence of abuse in sports along with the systemic structures that perpetuate coercive control while highlighting strategies for fostering a safer and more supportive environment in sports.

EVAWI International Conference on Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, and Fighting for Change:

In 2023, TAOS' Executive Director, Julie Ann Rivers-Cochran, and Director of Programs, Kacey Long, attended the annual End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI) conference in Chicago, where they gave a presentation titled "Preventing Sexual Assault in Sport While Centering Athletes and Athlete-Survivors." The EVAWI conference was a three-day event that gathered professionals from various fields—such as law enforcement, legal, victim advocacy, health care, and education—to discuss promising practices and emerging issues in responding to sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, human trafficking, and elder abuse in communities. The presentation by Ms. Rivers-Cochran and Ms. Long specifically addressed the prevalence of abuse in sports, drawing on statistics from the C.A.R.E Report, and educated attendees on the principles of institutional courage, betrayal, and cowardice. They emphasized the importance of creating trauma-informed, consent-based environments within sports to protect and empower athletes and athlete-survivors.

RESEARCH

National Research

In 2023, a collaboration between TAOS and the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine (AMSSM) was initiated. This partnership focuses on a groundbreaking research study to develop a trauma-informed questionnaire designed to accurately measure the incidence of sexual violence in elite sports, ensuring full representation of the diverse experiences and identities of U.S. elite athletes. With key initiatives set to launch in 2024, the partnership leverages AMSSM's research expertise and TAOS' engagement with athlete-survivors for participation in interviews and focus groups. This effort not only ensures a broad spectrum of participant diversity but also seeks to bridge the significant data gap concerning sexual abuse and harassment amongst U.S. elite athletes. The research is poised to offer unprecedented insights into the dynamics of sexual abuse in sports, facilitating the development of more effective prevention strategies and support mechanisms.



SOCIAL +

WEB PRESENCE

SOCIAL MEDIA



INSTAGRAM

3,903

FOLLOWERS

7.03%

ENGAGEMENT RATE

205,293

POST IMPRESSIONS



FACEBOOK

1,331

FOLLOWERS

5.2%

ENGAGEMENT RATE

44,656

POST IMPRESSIONS



TWITTER

1,552

FOLLOWERS

4.37%

ENGAGEMENT RATE

76,168

POST IMPRESSIONS

MEDIA + MENTIONS

IN 2023, TAOS RECEIVED MEDIA ATTENTION AT THE LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS AS ITS BOARD AND STAFF MEMBERS SOLIDIFIED THEIR ROLES AS PROMINENT FIGURES IN DISCUSSIONS SURROUNDING ABUSE IN SPORTS.



“U.S. Center for SafeSport was Created to Protect Athletes from Abuse. But is it Working?” | USA Today

“Details emerge of sex assault claims pile up against California college’s sports medicine director” | USA Today

“Michigan State University to release thousands of Nassar documents, Nessel reopens investigation” | Michigan Advance

“Haiti: FIFA Failing Sex Abuse Survivors” | Human Rights Watch

“Nassar Survivors: MSU failed again with Mel Tucker sexual harrasment probe” | Bridge Michigan

“SafeSport Center ‘In potential crisis’ according to panel’s survey of Olympic system” | AP News

“Michigan State trustees vote to release more Nassar documents to AG” | Lansing State Journal

“‘Long Overdue’: Whitmer signs bills advocated for by sexual assault survivors” | Michigan Advance

***SUSTAINABILITY +
GROWTH***

SUSTAINABILITY + GROWTH

We express our gratitude for your support in sustaining our efforts to eradicate sexual violence in sports. The progress of TAOS is indebted to the generosity of our organizational donors, individual supporters, partners, and advocates.

Increased Fundraising Initiatives

In 2023, TAOS achieved a significant milestone by being chosen as an official charity partner for both the 2023 United Airlines NYC Half Marathon and the 2023 TCS NYC Marathon. In total, twelve dedicated participants ran in these marathons, passionately fundraising on behalf of TAOS. The exposure gained from these high-profile events allowed TAOS to share its resources, advocacy, and initiatives with a diverse audience, fostering a greater understanding and support for its cause.

Organizational Growth

This year marked an expansion for TAOS' staff as we welcomed an Executive Assistant to the team. In this role, the Executive Assistant oversees all operational and administrative activities, contributing to the seamless functioning of the organization.



SUSTAINABILITY + GROWTH

2023 MAJOR DONORS

THE OAK FOUNDATION

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MICHIGAN NONPROFIT ASSOCIATION

GLOBAL SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

THE CRANE FOUNDATION

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Twitter: @SurvivorsArmy

LinkedIn: /The-Army-of-Survivors

TO DONATE

Make a tax-deductible donation by visiting TheArmyofSurvivors.org/donate or mailing a check made out to The Army of Survivors, Inc. to 428 W. Lenawee St. Lansing, MI 48933.

2023 DONORS

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Letitia Davenport-Ezell

Andrea Truitt

Angela Lund

Alexander Rusek

Arianna Guerrero

Charles Joseph Brown

Christie Perdue

Danielle Moore

David Leonard

Dwight Hicks

Erica Villegas

Grace French

Heidi Soo Lee

Jacob Martin

John-Michael Lander

Jon H Ochiai

Julie Ann Rivers-Cochran

Kaitlyn Basel

Karen Siegenberg

Katherine Andersen

Kelly Gee

Kristen Horner Warren

Marian Glancy

Mary Cain

Mary Fellows

Meghan Boyle

Rebecca Perkins

Susan Carole Lerner-Moore

Solvent Group

Shannon McDonough

Nicholas Martin

Tina Durbin

Tia Young

Tina

THANK YOU



Last year, The Army of Survivors celebrated our fifth anniversary. In these five years, we have witnessed the bravery of athletes across the sports community who have come forward about their experiences with abuse. Each story breaks our hearts and emboldens us to continue to fight for change.

We're focused on advocating for inclusive, diverse, and trauma-informed national and international laws and policies that support survivors of abuse in sports.

In 2023, our fight for change reached new heights. Members of the TAOS team met with Congressional representatives for education and awareness sessions around the issues athletes face in sports. Personally, I hope these sessions help guide members of Congress to prioritize safeguarding reforms, such as promoting the Safer Sports for Athletes Act, a bill promoting long overdue reform to the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

We have also connected with international partners to create worldwide change. I have seen this collaboration firsthand since becoming a member of the Sports and Rights Alliance steering group for Survivor Global South Network. Similarly, I was able to attend (and speak at) the Safe Sport International conference along with some of my fellow TAOS team members.

Our army has also grown in the last year. We have introduced a new fundraising opportunity, our charity bib racing spots for the TCS New York City Marathon, NYRR NYC Half Marathon, and Bank of America Chicago Marathon. We have welcomed new partners and are grateful for each and every single one of our donors. It is through our community's support that we are able to continue to push for a better, safer future.

Mary Cain

Board Director, The Army of Survivors

