



Athletes Saving Athletes™  
Education & Resources

ADVOCATES  
for INJURED  
ATHLETES

## Advocates for Injured Athletes

**TRAUMA INJURIES** leave athletes and their families in a state of shock and chaos. Every year, 3 million to 5 million injuries occur on the athletic field in competition and recreation. Our mission is to promote sports safety and to provide essential support, education, and resources to help keep athletes safe. In addition, A4IA seeks to strengthen injury prevention in high school sports by promoting the use of athletic trainers and by advocating for more stringent athletic trainer certification.

### For more information:

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### Donations may be made online or mailed to:

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**ADVOCATES FOR INJURED ATHLETES** (A4IA), a nonprofit 501c3 public charity, is dedicated to supporting student athletes. Through our programs and strategic alliances, we seek to strengthen injury prevention in high school sports by promoting the staffing of Certified Athletic Trainers (ATCs) and by developing youth sports safety programs and educational resources.

In 2010, A4IA began a grassroots effort to raise awareness about sports safety education. Becoming a vocal advocate for the profession of Athletic Training, A4IA has worked to raise awareness about the vital role athletic trainers play in keeping student athletes safe. Through education and clinical training, athletic trainers are capable of diagnosing and treating catastrophic injuries, helping to reduce the chance of an athlete's permanent disability or death.

In 2011, A4IA realized that student athletes could be empowered with sports safety education and tapped as an additional resource to help improve sports safety. Most often, after an athlete suffers an injury, a teammate is the first person to respond. Teaching athletes how to recognize signs and symptoms of injury, and teaching them lifesaving skills such as CPR and how to use an AED (Automated External Defibrillator), may help increase the chance of survival after a catastrophic injury. A4IA was fortunate to know (and meet ) high school athletes with survival stories—lives saved through the power of knowledge. A4IA decided to take the lead, turning their stories into a chance to educate other athletes. A4IA assembled a medical advisory team and created a unique education program, taught exclusively by certified athletic trainers, designed to empower high school athletes with skills that could potentially save a life, whether their own or that of a teammate. **ATHLETES SAVING ATHLETES™** (ASA) teaches student athletes how to recognize signs and symptoms of potentially life-threatening injuries encompassing concussion, head and neck injuries, heat illness, sudden cardiac arrest, diabetes, and asthma. In addition, athletes attending the program learn CPR and how to use an AED.

in 2012, A4IA launched the ASA program at Santa Fe Christian High School in Solana Beach, CA, where 50 student athlete leaders were nominated by their coaches and school administration to attend. Since the launch in 2012, more than 2,000 athletes in San Diego County have participated in the program, and two athletes have been credited with saving lives using the skills learned through the ASA program.

### OUR STORY

In Spring 2009, while playing in his final high school lacrosse game, Tommy Mallon headed downfield after a ground ball at full speed and collided with a player from the opposing team who was also going for the ball. Initially, the "hit" did not appear to be anything out of the ordinary, but Tommy did not immediately get up off the field. He was experiencing slight numbness at the back of his head, but his impulse was to "shake it off" and get back into the game. Fortunately, his teammate encouraged him to stay down while he called for help from the sidelines. Riki Kirchhoff, an on-site Certified Athletic Trainer, did not permit Tommy to get up, despite his request to do so. Tommy was spine-boarded and taken by ambulance to a nearby trauma hospital. He was told that his neck was fractured and that one of his vertebral arteries had been dissected, which had allowed blood to leak out of the artery and caused a dangerous clot to form. He was lucky to be alive, but he was at serious risk of grave consequences from his injury. He was transferred to the ICU and subsequently underwent months of challenging treatments and therapies. Although Tommy will never play contact sports again, the actions of his teammate, and the immediate on-field evaluation and medical care he received from the athletic trainer, made the difference between life and death during the final minutes of his high school lacrosse career. This experience inspired Tommy and his mother, Beth Mallon, to establish Advocates for Injured Athletes.

Advocates for Injured Athletes was incorporated on October 12, 2010 and is a California nonprofit public benefit corporation.