

**Remarks**  
**Ambassador D. Brent Hardt**  
**Boxing Equipment Donation**  
**Monday, December 10, 2012, 4:00 p.m.**  
**at the Andrew “Six Head” Lewis Gym, Albouystown**

Minister Dr. Frank Anthony  
Head of the Guyana Amateur Boxing Association (GABA) Mr. Steve  
Ninvalle,  
Head Coaches Mr. Gregory Cort, Mr. George Oprecht, and Mr. Floyd  
Grant,  
Young Athletes,  
Members of the media.

It is a real pleasure to be here at Six Head Lewis Gym in  
Albouystown to honor and support the “sweet science” of Boxing.  
Since becoming an organized sport in 1888, amateur boxing has enjoyed  
a rich tradition of excellence in the United States -- and in Guyana as  
well. As boxing developed as a sport, the United States has been a  
world leader in creating competitive opportunities, enhancing the sport's  
image and making amateur boxing safer for all of its participants.

Over the years, boxing has provided competitive opportunities for  
hundreds of thousands of young men -- and now young women. In  
August, 17-year old Claressa Shields became the first American woman

to win a boxing gold medal at the London Olympic Games, when women's boxing made its Olympic debut.

And of course we cannot forget that iconic sports figure, *Sports Illustrated* Magazine's "Athlete of the Century," and one of the most widely recognized Americans, Muhammad Ali. In 1954, 12-year-old Cassius Clay's bike was stolen. Young Cassius found a cop in a gym, Joe Martin, and boiling with youthful rage, told Martin he was going to "whup" whoever stole his bike. Martin told him, "You better learn to box first." Within weeks, 89-pound Cassius had his first bout, and his first win. Young Cassius dedicated himself to boxing with fervor unmatched by other young boxers.

Boxing is also a very popular sport in Guyana. From the turn of the 20th century through today, Guyana has produced top fighters and champions. Most notable is Michael Anthony Parris, whose discipline and steadfastness earned him a bronze medal at the 1980 Moscow Olympics. The gym we are standing in today was named after Andrew "Six Head" Lewis – the first boxer representing Guyana to have won a world title. This is an important space for us to remember Guyana's

boxing history, and an important space where we can work to develop Guyana's boxing future.

Neighborhood gyms, such as Six Head Lewis Gym, can provide an especially useful space for at-risk youths. Participation in sports teaches leadership, teamwork, communication, respect for rules, and respect for one another – all important skills that help young people succeed in all areas of their lives. Boxing can be a fulfilling and valuable experience for today's young people, and can also offer a positive release of frustration and negative energy. By design, boxing is a proven deterrent to anger and aggression because athletes learn that losing their temper or being overly aggressive is extremely counter-productive, and that that self-control is just as essential as being strong and in good shape.

The sport of boxing also builds self-confidence and character. Sports are a great way to build passion and self-discipline among young people, making them less susceptible to risky behavior and lifestyles. Let's face it, to be a successful boxer you really have to be disciplined. It takes hard work and dedication. Through the process of discipline and goal-setting learned at the gym, young people learn to be self-motivated

and more aware of the fact that doing the right thing can make good things happen. Becoming involved in a sport, a structured, organized program, can give needed structure to young people's lives. Our hope is that Guyanese youths can use the sport of boxing to improve their lives and apply lessons learned in the ring to the classroom and to daily life.

Together with the Guyana Amateur Boxing Association, the Embassy has identified three gyms around Guyana to receive a special donation today. They are Carryl's Gym of Linden, Rose Hall Jammers of Berbice, and of course, the Andrew `Six Head' Lewis Gym. Each gym will receive a set of brand new, state-of-the-art boxing equipment. This includes punching bags, training gloves, jump ropes, and protection via mouth guards, headgear, and groin and abdominal protectors.

We are also going to provide each gym with a book on sports scholarships and some materials with information for students interested in pursuing academic study at U.S. universities. Sports can open doors to educational opportunities, and we want to provide some resources so young Guyanese have the information and tools to find out more about sports scholarships. The book we are donating today, the “Sports

Scholarships: Insider’s Guide,” offers information on how to continue an athletic career in college and receive financial aid based upon your athletic ability.

I should note that college boxing began in the United States in 1919, and the National Collegiate Boxing Association (NCBA) was formed in 1976. The association is designed to provide a safe, positive educational experience for student athletes. The NCBA teaches boxing skills and fundamentals, while also providing boxers with the opportunity to become competitive student-athletes. Boxing and academics both require self-discipline and hard work, and success in one area often facilitates success in the other. Currently the NCBA has over 35 colleges and universities participating in collegiate boxing nationwide. If any of the coaches or students here today would like to know more about the NCBA and which universities support boxing as a sport, we have handouts available for you. Also, it just so happens that our *EducationUSA* Advisor, Aretha Majeed, is here today. If you are interested in receiving further guidance on university study in the United States, I encourage you to speak with her.

Although most student-athletes participating in intercollegiate athletics grow up in the United States, the number of international student-athletes is increasing dramatically – up more than 1,000 percent over the last 10 years. The influx of people from different countries and cultures into American colleges and universities has brought about benefits for international students, who find unique opportunities through the American system which binds sport and education.

Sports diplomacy is increasingly emerging as an integral part of efforts to foster closer relations between the United States and other nations. Building on the universal passion for sports as a way to transcend linguistic and socio-cultural differences, we are able to bring people closer together in new ways.

I hope that this donation today will contribute to that process and lead to closer relations between Guyanese and American boxers and to new areas for cooperation in other areas of sport. I am eager to see this boxing equipment put to good use in the gyms across Guyana. I also look forward to hearing from our young boxers in the audience today to see how far their training has taken them. Thank you.