

The basketball 'Peace Corps'

Alum's Shooting Touch foundation is a slam dunk for the kids

BY AMELIA WOOD ('13)

Fronting \$25,000 for a project that may not work out is not a good "on paper" business strategy; but **Justin Kittredge ('00)** took a risk that paid off more than he could have ever imagined.

"You have to follow your heart," says Kittredge, the Reebok International global director of basketball footwear. He decided to establish a foundation to help others, and work with an 'If you build it, they will come' mentality."

Kittredge founded the Shooting Touch foundation with his wife, Lindsey, in 2007. While many organizations provide relief to areas in need, he says, "We wanted our organization to do things differently."

Shooting Touch is a Boston-based company that uses the sport of basketball to positively impact the lives of children both on and off the court. The Shooting Touch Sabbatical Program is often referred to as "The Basketball Peace Corps." The program grants recent college graduates the opportunity to partake in a 10-month international work program using the platform of basketball to help foster education and influence positive social change in Third World countries.

Recent college graduates have visited Brazil, Cape Verde, South Africa and Zimbabwe to coach basketball and educate residents about HIV prevention, leadership and gender equality according to Kittredge.

After spending the money to send the first Shooting Touch sabbatical winner to Africa, the Kittredges held a fundraiser/dinner and raised \$30,000, which more than covered the trip's expenses.

Shooting Touch's Board of Directors include current professional basketball players, former players, sports writers and analysts, and coaches and assistant coaches from all over the world. "We knew it was key to establish imperative global relationships," says Kittredge.

This past year Kittredge and his wife have raised enough money to send two people overseas, but they don't plan on stopping there. "We want to be able to send 2, 3, 5, 10, 15 people overseas," Kittredge exclaims.

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Their determination to expand the organization only gets stronger. Kittredges are focused on more fundraising events, including an annual Up All Night basketball event.

They hope that other people, organizations and colleges will join Shooting Touch and help raise money for the sabbatical program. Nike and Powerade have both supported the foundation.

Kittredges and Shooting Touch have been featured on the cover of the *Boston Globe* Sunday sports section, in *Slam Magazine*, *Dime Magazine*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and on NBATV and Channel 5.

The Shooting Touch foundation also hosts youth basketball camps and clinics for underprivileged children, and the foundation's philosophy is "Coaching. Educating. Mentoring."


"The game of basketball is an important tool to teach these values," says Kittredge. "We have a passion for basketball and all the key attributes this sport brings to life."

Basketball has helped Kittredge with more than his community-building projects. After an interviewer at Reebok told him there seemed to be no reason to hire him, he invited Kittredge to participate in a Reebok League basketball game.

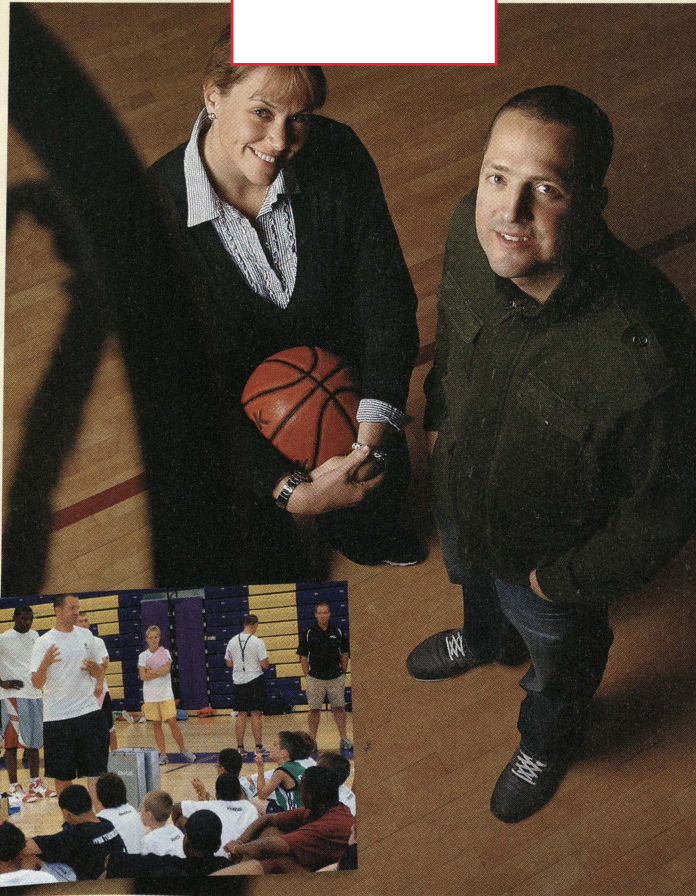
"The next morning I had the game of my life and he offered me an internship right after," says Kittredge. "I've been at Reebok for more than 10 years now."

As a business major with a concentration in hotel and

restaurant management, Kittredge was always passionate about basketball. "I'm glad I can use something I love to give back to the community. To see a player change for the better over the course of a couple of years and make it through difficult times and onto college is an amazing feeling. My entire life has revolved around the sport."

In addition to his years at Reebok International and the launch of Shooting Touch Inc., Kittredge has proved that you can integrate work and play evenly into a successful life. The baller owns three Guinness World Record titles for free throws. 

* Learn more at www.shootingtouch.com



Justin Kittredge ('00) and his wife, Lindsey, have turned a love of basketball into the Shooting Touch foundation, often referred to as the "Basketball Peace Corp." The foundation supports athletics, HIV education and social development around the globe.