



### **Letters on Leadership #19: “Dear Parent”**

*The following is an introductory letter by The Program Founder and CEO, Eric Kapitulik, to all of the parents of the K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade Youth Instructional Lacrosse team that Eric will be coaching this spring.*

Dear Parent,

I'm Eric Kapitulik, the Head Coach for your child's instructional lacrosse league team this Spring. I am a former collegiate lacrosse player and graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD. Upon graduating, I served in the U.S. Marine Corps as an Infantry Officer and in Marine Corps Special Operations. I am now the Founder and CEO of The Program ([www.TheProgram.org](http://www.TheProgram.org)), a team building and leadership development company for college and professional athletic teams and major corporations.

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I wanted to send a brief letter to introduce myself and to share a few thoughts on my coaching style, as well as to provide a few suggestions for you as parents of young athletes:

- 1) Contrary to most people's beliefs, sports do not teach great life lessons. Parents and coaches do *through* sports. In some cases, this is your first opportunity to do so. I encourage us all to take that opportunity.
- 2) First and foremost, we are going to have fun. This is instructional lacrosse and I will be sure to teach your child how to throw, catch and pick up a ground ball. Of course, all of us want to do things that 1) we are good at and 2) that are fun. I have a little bit of control over the former, but 100% control the latter. I will be sure to do so. With that said, your child has a responsibility to come to practice with a good attitude and to make it fun, as well. If you have a great attitude about practice, it does not guarantee that your child will have one, but not doing so *will* guarantee that they have a bad one. Please be excited about practice and share that excitement with your child.
- 3) At the start of every practice, the athletes will line up, shake hands with the coaches and say "hello." At the end of every practice, they will line up, shake hands with the coaches and say "thank you." Shaking hands builds confidence. Saying "thank you" teaches appreciation. These are two things sadly lacking in American society.
- 4) We will race / compete in almost every drill in practice. When the teams are competing, if your son or daughter is not involved, they will be instructed and made to cheer for their teammates who are competing. Competition makes us better as individuals. Cheering for our teammates makes us better as a team. We do not have to sacrifice one for the sake of the other. And we won't. If you are watching practice, I hope that you will cheer for all of the young lacrosse players, as well.
- 5) My wife has provided "guidance" to me and "suggested" that I do not offer my thoughts on habitual tardiness or on parents who complain about the weather until we all become more familiar with each other. I love my wife and **always** appreciate her guidance and suggestions.

I am very excited to coach your son or daughter this year. Their safety, health and well-being are my first concern. We will have a great time learning how to play "the fastest game on two feet,"



while also learning lessons that will last a lifetime. If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

**Eric Kapitulik**  
Founder & CEO

*"Letters on Leadership" are published periodically by The Program, a leadership development and team building company that works with the nation's leading corporations as well as professional and collegiate athletic teams.*

*For information on developing better leaders and more cohesive teams at your organization, visit <http://www.theprogram.org/corporate>.*