

Laureus Sport for Good Foundation

KAPIL DEV AND STEVE WAUGH LAUNCH LAUREUS PROJECT TO HELP TSUNAMI VICTIMS

- **Children and villagers delighted by visit of world famous cricketers**
- **Sport helps to re-create community spirit in devastated area**
- **'We are determined to help' – says new Academy member Steve Waugh**
- **Seenigama Sports is 39th Laureus Sport for Good Project worldwide**

SEENIGAMA, SRI LANKA, December 6, 2005 - World famous cricketers Kapil Dev and Steve Waugh have visited the village of Seenigama, near Galle, to launch a new Laureus Sport for Good Foundation project aimed at helping victims of last December's tsunami disaster.

The Seenigama Sports project involves boys and girls, aged from six upwards, taking part in various inter-village sports leagues with matches and training sessions. Sport is used as the means to aid the post-tsunami healing process and to re-create community spirit among the young people in the area.

On the visit, Kapil Dev and Steve Waugh, both members of the Laureus World Sports Academy, met children who are taking part in the project and villagers who were badly affected by the tsunami, many losing their homes and their livelihoods. The cricketers also took part in a children's cricket match, much to the excitement of the youngsters and the large crowd watching.

Indian Test match legend Kapil Dev is an enthusiastic worker for underprivileged young people in his own country, where Laureus supports two other projects – *The Magic Bus* in Mumbai and *SKSN* in Rajasthan. Dev also heads KHUSHII, an India-based NGO, which runs seven projects, one of which has built homes and a day care centre for tsunami victims in Tharangambadi, Nagapattinam.

Dev said: "The tsunami was a devastating event for the whole of South East Asia and the Indian sub-continent. It is almost a year on and now that the major relief agencies are winding down their work, it is up to organisations like Laureus to do what we can to help with the rebuilding. Sport is a wonderful means to achieve this, creating team-spirit and unity of purpose."

For Australia's most successful cricket captain Steve Waugh, it was a very emotional moment. He was named the newest Laureus World Sports Academy member in Sydney on December 2, and within days he was in Sri Lanka for the launch of a Laureus project. "I was delighted to be invited to become a Laureus Academy member and doubly delighted to get down to work for the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation so quickly. Achievements on the sporting field are great, but after all it's only a game. When you help people out in situations like this, realistically it's more important. I know that is what all my fellow Laureus Academy members believe.

"Despite the horrific images we saw on television, I don't think people in the western world have any idea how traumatic the events of December 26 were here and in Indonesia and Thailand. It makes us more determined to do what we can to help the youngsters, now and in the future. Many will have lost family members and friends and this will always be in their memory, but we can at least try our best to restore some degree of normality to their lives," added Waugh.

The Seenigama Sports project aims to involve both girls and boys, aged from six upwards, in ongoing sports competitions at village level. An estimated 800 participants can take part in the project through various inter-village sports leagues with matches and training sessions taking place weekly.

Sport is used as the means to tackle a wide range of social issues generating a positive impact on the region as a whole by building leadership and teamwork skills, introducing stability and a sense of enjoyment, increasing confidence and participation of females in community planning, increasing collaboration and information sharing amongst the villages involved and enabling the post-tsunami healing process to continue.

The project got under way in September with a men's volleyball competition between six villages which proved very successful, not only in attracting players but also in terms of the crowds that it drew to watch, with people coming from all the villages involved to support their teams. This was an encouraging start to the programme as one of the key objectives of the scheme is to increase participation and communication amongst the people of Seenigama and its surrounding villages.

Eventually organised sports will include volleyball, cricket, badminton, swimming, football, cross-country running and table tennis, and will be linked into the other critical elements of rebuilding - medical, family support and school activities.

The Laureus Sport for Good Foundation was set up to fund and promote the use of sport as a tool for social change and assistance and currently supports 39 projects worldwide, a number which is growing each year. Its work focuses on helping young people overcome challenging social issues including poverty, homelessness, war, violence, drug abuse, discrimination, AIDS and natural disasters.

At the heart of the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation is the Laureus World Sports Academy, a dedicated group of 41 legendary sportsmen and sportswomen, who have all volunteered their services in this cause and act as global ambassadors.

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Photos of Kapil Dev and Steve Waugh in Sri Lanka are available from www.laureusarchive.com