

The employment scene on PEI

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Much can be gained from having sports in your life

by Gloria Welton

At the opening ceremonies for **Canada Games 2009**, many dignitaries commented that the athletes participating in the games could be the next leaders of our country. They also said these experiences open up options and teach youth to persevere through adversity. "It is a time to dare to dream big while breaking down barriers and meeting the quest for excellence," said **Governor General Michaëlle Jean**, who officially opened the Games.

Cierra Gaudet, a grade 12 student at Three Oaks High School, participated in two sports at Canada Games 2009: basketball and track. Cierra and Andrew Costa, also from Summerside, were the only PEI athletes to compete in two sports.

Cierra began playing basketball when she was in grade three and started track in grade two. She also spent time in soccer and cross country running. She says her parents, other family members, teachers and friends always supported her sports activities.

The benefits of sports participation

"Sports are such a big part of my life right now," says Cierra. "I believe the Canada Games experience will give me a firm base for my future. I worked hard leading up to the games and my main focus was on basketball. We had tournaments in Montreal, Winnipeg, and Nova Scotia. I had to keep on top of the schedule, the practice times, the fitness program, and my nutritional needs. I had to keep up my work in track as well. There was not much time left for anything else.

"**Dave MacEachern** was my coach for track. He gave me the flexibility that I needed to work this into my already hectic schedule. I would not have been able to do both if it wasn't for the cooperation from both Dave and my basketball coach, **Kathy Murray**. I have tremendous praise for my coaches and team manager. They gave me this chance to experience both sports. My part of the bargain was to do my personal best."

Cierra says she was so consumed with the preparation of the games she did not have time for a summer job. "Before all of this started I planned to work this summer and spend some time thinking about a career plan. A career in sports is definitely on my top three list of dream jobs. I don't have a clear direction yet but I am looking forward to taking a leadership course this year in high school. Community involvement is important to me. I love meeting new people, and I strive to meet challenges."

photo by Rudi Terstege: www.canadagamesphoto.com



Cierra Gaudet says her Canada Games experience was tremendous on many levels. "I can't describe how fortunate I was to have been a part of something so huge in Canada and to have the chance to compete in my own province. Those two weeks will be embedded in my memory forever. Taking part in two sports was most certainly a challenge. I'm thankful for all of my teammates and coaches and to be able to share special moments with them. I think the Games were a huge success on PEI."

Being involved with sports has definitely opened opportunities for Cierra to develop a sense of her likes and dislikes, skills and abilities, and personal characteristics that are helping to shape who she is. All of this will help in her career choices and reaching many goals in her life.



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Gloria Welton