

Sports...Unites, Empowers, Ignites the Disadvantaged

Versiti Podcast: Season 2 - Episode 4

Host: Edgar Daggett

Guest: Quentin Prince

INTRO CLIP

QUENTIN: I mean, it's an awesome feeling to make an impact. I often say to the volunteers that I work with at our local colleges and universities that our fingerprints never fade from the lives that we touch. Having the opportunity to work within an organization, work within a community and have an impact will last through the ages. And that's essentially what I wanna do. I wanna make sure that I'm having an impact and a space that kind of echoes through the years. So when I'm gone, that impact is still great. And it, it's just a good feeling.

BUMPER

EDGAR: Everyone, welcome back to another Stand Out from the Inside podcast presented by Versiti. I'm your host Edgar Daggett. Super excited to be here for another week. If you haven't gone back on last week's episode, the two-part special. Go back. Listen. See it on YouTube. You can listen to it on all the major platforms here in the U.S... But I'm super excited to bring you another guest. As we're going through guests, looking up who can be here, who will be that perfect person to build a spark in the community with you or to inspire others? We're diving deep. We've found another great guest who is right now in Milwaukee. He is an executive at the Milwaukee Youth Sports Alliance. A nice group doing amazing, amazing things for our youth, for our community and getting the world of sports involved. And how does that impact our community? He's been doing this for some time now, and I'm super excited for you all to hear his story, to hear the impacts that he is making within Milwaukee. And how that's spreading out of Milwaukee as well. So to welcome you all to an amazing person, we have Quentin Prince leading the Stand Out from the Inside podcast. Quentin, welcome to the show. [00:02:33]

QUENTIN: Thank you. Thank you. Appreciate you. Pleasure to be here.

EDGAR: Oh, no problem. Thank you. Your story that you were telling me is inspiring. This is what the Stand Out from the Inside podcast is all about. How do we inspire our communities? How do we shine a light on those making an impact? And I wanna get this going and started because we have so much amazing things to talk about. But to let everybody know a little bit about Quentin and where he comes from. So, who is Quentin Prince?

QUENTIN: So Quentin Prince is a native of Milwaukee. Grew up on the North Side of the city. Was schooled and educated here in Milwaukee. Definitely tons of love for the city. But my main roles when it comes to how I'm impacting the city is as an educator, as a community leader, as a financial advisor and executive in the nonprofit space.

EDGAR: So, many roles, many hats.

QUENTIN: Many, many. Yeah, definitely.

EDGAR: So how did you get started in the nonprofit? Like, did you always do nonprofit before this? What was the journey before you got to the Milwaukee Youth Sport Alliance?

QUENTIN: So actually I never thought that I'd be working in the community or working with youth at all. you know, They say "follow your passion and not the money." I was going to school for architecture and thought that this was going to be my path here in Milwaukee and that's how I was gonna make my impact. But I actually started volunteering at a local school and kind of fell in love with education in the non-traditional sense; meaning I didn't see myself as a classroom teacher, but I knew I wanted to have an impact on kids and on the community. And so I ended up going back for that, and I've been there ever since. It's definitely a passion. I can't really see myself doing much else... Yeah, granted, I see myself doing other things, but I'll still always have that tie to the community. 'Cause, that's what fills my cup. That's what I'm passionate about. I love to be able to have an impact on the community and have influence and create change and have an impression or whatnot that will last through the ages. I've been in this work for the last 20 years and it's great to see the impact that I've been able to make with my students within MPS or in the nonprofit sector. And how those relationships kinda last for years. I've got students that I had as a teacher in kindergarten. And they're all grown now. They're all getting married and having babies and they're inviting their old teacher Mr. Prince back to some of these things. And so that lets me know I made a lasting impact. I I love the work that I do. I love being able to make an impact and see the growth and success that kids can have here in this city.

EDGAR: That's amazing. That must feel so rewarding for them to come back and have those ties and be like, look what I'm doing. And this is all because of you.

QUENTIN: Exactly.

EDGAR: And sharing the messages that you shared.

QUENTIN: Exactly. I had a youth come back in like 2019. He was off to go to college and he came back for the summer. He just called me and hit me up and said Prince, if it wasn't for you, I wouldn't be where I'm at. He's going to college. He's on the soccer team and I'm like that's awesome that I had that kind of impact and influence on you. I do the work because I enjoy it. Definitely, that is the heartwarming part about it that gives you goosebumps and whatnot about the work. People often ask me why I continue to do the work. Because one) I love to have that impact, but then, two) the moment that I don't get emotional, or don't get teary eyed, or don't get goosebumps or excited. When I see one of my youth or students you know, graduate college, join a team, have some level of success. That's when I know it's time for me to hang up, but right now that's not the case.

EDGAR: [00:05:38] And that's only a few that come up to you. Maybe there's even more that have done so much, but they haven't expressed it. So it's an incredible story. Are you born and raised in Milwaukee?

QUENTIN: Yep, definitely. Yep, born and raised here in Milwaukee.

EDGAR: All right. So how was it living in Milwaukee? Like where'd you come from? Like what cities, how was your growth from adulthood?

QUENTIN: Grew up on the North Side of the city. Single parent household. My mom is a physician, she's a gynecologist. And so I was able to see Milwaukee through a different lens and that lens was healthcare, out the gate. And so I was able to see what the health disparities looked like in the city; you know, have conversations with her about what issues and concerns that she ran into in the healthcare system, how it impacted Black and Brown communities specifically, but definitely a lot of education happened. As a youth I was educated and schooled in the North Shore area. So went to school with predominantly people who didn't look like me. So I was one of like 12 in my class. Great experience. But again, it showed me at an early age kind of what the divisions in the city look like. But you know, since then I've worked to kind

of bridge the gap and get everybody on the same team and have this city heal and not be divided.

EDGAR: Your mother was a physician. So what were some of the stories that you were hearing? Because those stories impacted what you do now as you said there are definitely disparities, and you're trying to change that. You're trying to change the balance. So what were some of those stories that you were hearing when you were young?

QUENTIN: You know, I would hear about... Her main focus was pregnant women, O.B.G.Y.N... She would tell me what mortality rates look like for women of color when it came to given birth. Some of the hurdles that they might have to go through financially when raising kids here in the city. Seeing that people don't necessarily all have equal access to health. And so that was something I was made aware of at an early age. I never had the mindset to be able to go into healthcare. I've got other family members that are also in the healthcare space. I never had that mindset, but as an adult, I have the ability to be able to also kind of navigate that space. Because again, I was introduced to it in an early age and I still wanna make that impact. So for example, I'm on the board of directors for Progressive Community Health Centers. And that allows me the opportunity to impact the city through a different lens; but then you know, take all the experiences and knowledge and whatnot that I gained as a youth and throughout my career and apply it to that role there. I also am on the American Heart Association diversity and inclusion impact committee. That allows me to work in the healthcare space, to change the disparities and the gaps that we see here in our city. [00:09:51]

EDGAR: So you entered into healthcare, you're similar to my role is. We're not, on the front lines. We're not talking to those patients, but we hear those stories. We hear some of the disparities that exist. And in my world here at Versiti, we lack the blood supply. We're at blood shortage. We don't have enough diverse donors, especially. So that's why we always encourage those that fall in those categories to come donate. 'Cuz that makes a difference. That can also help kind of bridge that gap. We hear stories of women and when they're pregnant or other stories with children and it's because sometimes we also don't have the blood and that's why we encourage everybody to donate. But it's super cool to hear someone that's grown up, that's seen it and out making that difference. So, you're in all these boards, but how did you get tied into all these boards? You said the American Heart Association, how did you get rolled up into those roles?

QUENTIN: For my work in the community. I've been doing community work for the last 20 years. And so I've been able to sit at various tables and have an impact with different organizations and I enjoy the work and I've done and I've excelled at the work that I do. So, I don't just focus on one particular demographic like youth. I focus on adults and workforce development and all these other spaces that I'm able to have impact in. And so when it comes time for some organizations to look at who can provide a benefit to the organization and has a skillset that we're particularly looking for; I often get called to the table for those kind of things. It's definitely been a great experience. I love to be able to navigate various spaces. I mean, it's an awesome feeling to make an impact. I often say to the volunteers that I work with at our local colleges and universities that our fingerprints never fade from the lives that we touch. Having the opportunity to work within an organization, work within a community and have an impact will last through the ages. And that's essentially what I wanna do. I wanna make sure that I'm having an impact and a space that kind of echoes through the years. So when I'm gone, that impact is still great. And it, it's just a good feeling.

EDGAR: That's incredible. Some of these moves that you're doing are very big and very impactful, and you're seeing it to this day. You're seeing it when those students that you had are now grown, they're coming back, and they're thanking you. So those impacts are there and will last for a lifetime. Currently you are an executive for the Milwaukee Youth Sports Alliance, so tell me a little bit about that.

QUENTIN: So the Milwaukee Youth Sports Alliance is a citywide collective effort for us here in Milwaukee to ensure that youth have access to high quality youth sports programs that not only benefit them physically, but then also mentally. Just like the city of Milwaukee is divided, our sports sector is divided as well. So if you've got programs that are on the north side of the city, and you've got a program that's on the south side of the city, you don't see collaboration between those organizations when ultimately they have the same vision and focus of making sure that the youth that they work with are impacted in a positive sense through sports. And so, what we do at the Milwaukee Youth Sports Alliance is to unite the youth sports community to use it as a tool for social change. One of the quotes that I often use is a quote from Nelson Mandela that says sport has a power to change the world. It speaks to youth in a language that you I'm totally messing up the quote, but it's an awesome, powerful quote that he shared in a speech probably like 21, 22 years ago. And that reigns true, what he said there. Organizations don't often utilize sport in the way that we could. Sport is a huge convener. When the Milwaukee Bucks won the championship, you saw tens of thousands of people coming together to celebrate this in the midst of one of the darkest times in the last few decades;

where you had civil unrest and social justice movements happening, but you had people coming together to celebrate around sports. So sports is definitely a tool that can be utilized for more than just the sport. Sports has an impact, not only on the game, but then it also trickles into education. It trickles into healthcare. It trickles into crime prevention in the city. Schools and community organizations might use sport as a catalyst to bring their kids in for incentives; to incentivize them to do well in school and X, Y, Z. You see the impact that that has. We all know that the benefit of sport can help with any kind of health disparities that we might see. But then also when it comes to crime prevention, if we've got kids involved in a positive space — like any kind of sporting activity — they're not out committing crimes. They're doing something positive that's keeping them engaged and whatnot. And so, at the Milwaukee Youth Sports Alliance, we wanna make sure that we advocate on behalf of youth sports organizations at the federal and state level for funding and access and awareness and resources. But then also making sure that we improve coordination between sports organizations. So I mentioned before, like if you've got an organization on the North Side and you've got an organization on the South Side, improving the coordination between them can have a tremendous benefit for not only the organizations but the youth that they might serve. So, if I've got a kid who is a dual sport kid and they play soccer and they play football, but I've got two different coaches that have the same kid, but they're not communicating, that is not to the benefit of the kids. So making sure that we're collaborating across the city in order to uplift and be on the same team: our kids. But then also gather and share best practices and research. Often if you're involved in sports if you're a coach. If you're a coach, you are coaching a sport, cuz either your kids played, you played, or you just wanna volunteer and give back your time. But those individuals aren't always trained in sports based youth development, trauma informed care, or social emotional learning. So, at the Milwaukee Youth Sports Alliance, that's one of the benefits of being a part of our membership and a part of the Alliance is that we offer training and workshop opportunities for all your coaches, volunteers, and whatnot, to be able to be trained in social emotional learning. We're coming out of pandemic and we understand the importance of social emotional learning with our kids. We see what they went through. We need to have the tools in order to successfully work with them to get them to a good space. Many of the kids that come to sports organizations, or any organization, have some level of trauma. If we don't understand what that trauma looks like, how to work with that kid, you could be doing more damage than good. And then the last thing I talked about, sports-based youth development: sports-based youth development is a whole amazing sector that will allow our coaches, volunteers, and our educators and whatnot to kind of see the power of sport and how it can be used for the benefit of our kids.

EDGAR: [00:17:30] Yeah. And it's impactful. Like, you hear professional athletes say it all the time: LeBron James, Serena Williams, Kevin Durant, just big ones that they do something big. So, they win MVPs or they make it to the league and they're like, "I'm not supposed to be here." You hear that nonstop. And it's because of sports. It got them out from where they came from. The hood or just a bad time, bad family, whatever it is, sports allowed them to escape. Sports allowed them — you didn't want to be home, you went outside, you played. Eventually you got good enough. You started traveling, and you make it and it changed their entire life. They're doing big things and they start giving back. I believe LeBron James has a foundation school in Ohio, in Akron, Ohio where he is from. It now gives free tuition to youth to their youth. That's the impact that sports can have on children.

QUENTIN: Exactly.

EDGAR: When these youth, when they are playing the sports; you said it, crime goes down because they're not performing those acts because now they don't feel like they need to. And they don't get involved with those negative individuals that, that's what they were born into. That's what they're gonna do. Have you seen that rate decrease?

QUENTIN: Or, it kind of fluctuates. So, engagement in sports right now is on a little bit of a decline. Obviously, we're coming out of a pandemic. Kids weren't able to engage in sports, at least not kids all across the city. You had some pockets of our city where sports was happening. And that, again, points to the disparities when it comes to youth sports. So if you've got a group on the North Shore that are able to facilitate sporting events, but then you got a group in the inner city that's not because of either resources, or access, or whatever. You see a decline. So we are, re-engaging the youth and on an upward trajectory. I've got tons of youth organizations and partners; one specifically MPS or the Boys and Girls Club where they are reimagining kind of what sports looks like and bringing it back to the heyday. Always use the example of when I grew up: sports was everything. Growing up in the eighties and nineties in Milwaukee, if you were a Black kid living in the inner city, if you saw a group of 10 kids and you asked them, "Who here plays sports for a specific program?" Nine of those 10 kids would say, "yeah, I do." And so we wanna get Milwaukee sports back to that, where all kids are engaged. All kids are participating in something positive and not engaged in this negative stuff that's happening around the city. It was on a decline where we're slowly moving up. But looking forward to bringing it back to new heights.

EDGAR: [00:20:40] So with so many positive and negative things around — this is our youth, what they see and what they hear also affects them — you mentioned the Milwaukee Bucks winning the championship. That was amazing, uplifting. It gives those youth in the community potential. They say, "Wow, Giannis, all the other players, that's where I can be. I can achieve that goal because most of them come just in a similar situation from them. Some maybe even worse. And this is where they're making it, they're reaching the ultimate, ultimate goal. But with some of our cities, we are seeing also negative surroundings. Whether it's gun violence, whatever it is. How does that impact the youth? Do they see it? Do they hear about it? Does it change the mindset? Does that have any effect on the youth part of this program?"

QUENTIN: Oh, yeah, definitely. So not to this program specifically, but as to youth as a whole, being in a community where you see lots of violence and crime and all those kind of things has a traumatic effect. And so, the Milwaukee Youth Sports Alliance essentially wants to work with these youth so that they aren't impacted by these negative things. They aren't experiencing trauma continually in the inner city. It does have an impact where it could be deflating. If you come from a community where you are seeing negative things happen all the time, that puts you in a mindset of I'm gonna be stuck in this stuff forever. I'm always gonna experience this. I'm not able to escape this. But like you said sports can be that thing that can get you out of those situations and you can escape your surroundings and make an awesome career for yourself. I often will... would tell our youth that we work with that sports is definitely great. And we would love to be able to see you playing at the collegiate or professional level, but if you aren't able to make it to that space, you can still be tied into a great career, maybe connected to sports. And so part of the Milwaukee Youth Sports Alliance as well is working with our partners to kind of expose kids to post-secondary educational opportunities. What happens when you graduate high school? What could you essentially do? What happens when you go to college? What career paths could you go down? So, the main reason that we do these things is because exposure is huge. If a kid only knows like the four corners of a neighborhood and they're not exposed to a particular career opportunity, how can they ever know to aspire to be that? Same with our sports. So if you were to walk around one of our inner city neighborhoods and you asked a bunch of kids if they played basketball or football, undoubtedly, you get all the kids that say, yeah, we do. We've held a football by the time we were like three years old. But there are so many other sports that could be beneficial to our youth that we expose 'em to. You got tennis, you got golf, you got volleyball. You got soccer. Lacrosse. Across the board, kids need to be exposed to these opportunities 'cuz you never know what sport they might gravitate towards and latch on. And that sets them on trajectory to do great things. You mentioned the Williams sisters; that is an awesome story where you had two

girls — two Black girls — who were introduced to the game of tennis by their dad. That doesn't happen all the time. And so we wanna make sure that kids are exposed to as many opportunities as possible; because again, that light lightbulb moment might come on and you might really spark something in that kid to change the trajectory of their life.

EDGAR: [00:24:20] Especially tennis. And you said it football, and basketball; those are the two main sports that everybody hears about. Maybe throwing in a little bit of baseball, but then the other sports. Tennis. Most people don't even think about playing tennis and it's a fun sport. It's competitive. But Serena and Venus Williams, it's sport that they achieved, that they can do great in. And if you don't try it, how do you know? And I wanted to make a point, because you said you were also involved in post-secondary education; college level, universities. It's super important that not everybody's gonna make it and not everybody's gonna be in the NBA, NFL, whatever the league is; maybe not even college. But how do you make education a prime piece? Because we say student athlete and student is put first; student, then the athlete.

QUENTIN: Exactly.

EDGAR: There's always gonna be those grades, but how do we make an emphasis on continuing education? 'Cause what we don't wanna see is our youth go to school expecting they're gonna make the million dollar bucks. You can be great at something else. You can have great communications skills, whatever it is. You can be great at that too, but how do we shine a light in those pathways and how do you guys do it?

QUENTIN: [00:25:40] So one of the ways that I do it is, again, going back to that exposure piece. We have the opportunity to connect to a bunch of career professionals here in the city that will come and speak to the kids and let them know about what their college journey looked like, and then what career they might be participating in. And so that is a huge, huge opportunity to influence a youth in a positive light. So, if you've got a kid that's introduced to somebody who does sales, or marketing, or is a physical therapist, or is an accountant, or an architect, or financial advisor, any of things; these are awesome viable career opportunities that these kids have the ability to go towards. It's really just kind of like inundating them with the information, letting them know the possibilities are there, connecting them to positive people in the community that are doing these things, and then creating the opportunity for them to be introduced or participate in a space. So, internships, apprenticeships, all of that good stuff. And not all kids are going to either go to college — which that's a hundred percent their choice — but continuing education is something that I'll always

advocate for. So, if you happen not to go to a four year, if you wanna go to a two year, or if you want to get a certificate or whatever the case is; continuing your education, I'm definitely a lifelong learner. So, making sure that you are continuing to grow and learn is something that I definitely emphasize with the kids.

EDGAR: [00:27:00] Oh, that's amazing. So how do you do a lot of this outreach? Like how do you get more youth involved within Milwaukee? 'Cause whether it's in Milwaukee or do you do a little bit more like outside of the city?

QUENTIN: It's primarily in Milwaukee, but I have branched out to our surrounding communities to have an impact there as well. When it comes to outreach, you really just have to go out and have the conversations and do the work. I like to be that person who is a relationship builder. So, me going out to 20 schools and doing a speech or something to a bunch of high school kids; or me going to a community organization and speaking to them; or me going into the community to facilitate some type of programming. I'm all for it. So, definitely wanna make sure that the outreach continues because if you don't then, my fear is that we'll miss the opportunity to impact that kid who could truly make a difference. So, I'm constantly out there, you know, trying to work with communities and whatnot, to make sure we can provide programming for the kids. But then also working with our different sectors, so, education or nonprofit or business sector; making sure that we are working as a team collectively to impact our city and impact our youth in a positive sense.

EDGAR: What's the initial reaction when you're doing this outreach to you? Is it automatically "let's do it and sign up" or do you get some pushback? Whether it's from the older kids who have been around already or from the parents of the younger.

QUENTIN: I mean, working with teenagers, you definitely will get pushback regardless. Even if you know the opportunity is gonna be great for them 'cuz it's all about showing them or getting them to understand the value proposition. So understanding the value and the rationale as to why we're trying to introduce you to this opportunity. They might not immediately see it, but one thing that I try to do with parents and with the youth is for them to have that long term vision of what this opportunity could start as and how it could end up. Unfortunately, we live in an age of instant gratification. So if a youth happens not to see the immediate impact of what we're trying to introduce to them, yeah, they're definitely gonna fall off and not wanna participate. But you have to continue that message, continue to educate, and continue to provide

opportunities like outreach in order for them to see some of these things that are happening.

EDGAR: Yeah. And that's something that I wanna point out to everybody listening or viewing this podcast. You have to keep going. You have to keep moving forward because even with this, the world about sports, entertainment, you're gonna get those nos, that push back, and you can't just stop. You gotta keep going. And what Quentin said: that one person. They can make a difference. You don't wanna quit on that one person.

QUENTIN: Exactly.

EDGAR: [00:30:05] You keep going, keep pushing them. Whatever it is. We do it here at Versiti. We have our outreach team that's always outside, whether in fairs, different tabling events, just going door to door. And they're always looking for new donors or just spreading the word about how you can help, how we can all help our community and one another. You never know your neighbor, whoever it is; that one special person — you don't wanna miss.

QUENTIN: Yeah, exactly.

EDGAR: You don't wanna miss out on that one donor; that person that can change the world and you wanna do whatever it takes to help your community and your people in general. It's an incredible mission that you're doing, and sports is an amazing way to do this. Being with the youth, being creative. And you're leading them to a brighter future. And that's what you're doing. That's an amazing, amazing way that you're reaching out to them and teaching them life skills as well. Going to school.

QUENTIN: Exactly.

EDGAR: And knowing that just because you grew up in this one neighborhood doesn't mean you have to follow the same steps as everybody around you. You can be that one person changed. Take that left turn instead of the right, and it'll take you in a whole different journey. So, it's incredible. We really do appreciate the time, Quentin. Thank you so much for sharing with all of our guests. If you guys wanna learn a little bit more about the Milwaukee Youth Sports Alliance, visit their website. Learn. If you're in the Milwaukee region and you wanna learn different ways of how to help, whether donating or just wanna be a volunteer, check them out. They're making great, great strides to helping our communities. They're getting bigger and bigger and helping our youth. So they're building a brighter future for everybody. So check 'em out.

Quentin, I wanna say thank you so much for being on the podcast. You've been amazing, sharing your message, sharing your goals and seeing what you're looking forward to in the future. All right, Quentin, before we let you go. Is there anything you wanna say to all of our viewers listening and watching right now?

QUENTIN: Yeah, I wanna emphasize the great work that you all do. You are highlighting people in the community who are doing great work, but I also wanna make sure that we pay homage and highlight the work that you all are doing. I mentioned the work that I'm doing. I'm educating youth and having an impact in the classroom, or on the field, or on the basketball court. But you all are having an impact and saving lives as well. I just wanna make sure that the community understands the great work and the opportunity that you offer; providing this life-saving source for the community is definitely something that's crucial and vital and will always be there. The more people that we can get engaged and understand the benefits of connecting with an organization like yours to giving their time and giving of themselves for what the cause is. Definitely wanna make sure that people understand that. Hats off and applause to you all.

EDGAR: Definitely. Thank you. Yeah. For all of you listening, if you wanna know more, go to [Versiti.org](https://www.versiti.org). Learn what different ways that you can volunteer. And most importantly, donate. We are always open and always accepting new donors. And, as you said, we are here working together in our communities, trying to make a difference and improve our lives, our living. I wanna say once again, thank you Quentin for joining the Stand Out from the Inside podcast. And I just wanna remind you all that we are here working together. We are here improving the daily lives of all of our community members. And I wanna remind you all, how do you stand out from the inside? Please like, subscribe. This is the Stand Out from the Inside podcast presented by Versiti. Once again, I'm your host Edgar Daggett. And we'll see you all next time.