

# Proskauer Spearheads Even Strength Initiative with the NHL, the New Jersey Devils and the National Down Syndrome Society

August 1, 2017

August 1, 2017 (NEW YORK) – In hockey, the term “even strength” refers to a situation in which both teams have an even number of players on the ice. It is also the name of an initiative designed by Proskauer lawyers to raise awareness of the employability of young adults with Down syndrome. Through the efforts of Chad Morin, Allan Bloom, Chris Gardephe, Yoni Grossman-Boder, David Heck, Jon Oram and Bill Silverman, as well as Proskauer alumnus Brad Shron, who is now the general counsel of the New Jersey Devils, and in partnership with the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS), young adults with Down syndrome have the opportunity to work as paid interns for the New Jersey Devils hockey team. Inspired by the Firm's encouragement to dedicate time to pro bono opportunities with personal significance, Chad suggested this idea. Chad shares a love for hockey with many of his family members, including his uncle Jeff, who has Down syndrome. Jeff served as an assistant coach/team manager on every youth hockey team on which Chad played.

Creating this program was truly a team effort. David reached out to the National Down Syndrome Society, which, in turn, made Even Strength part of a national campaign (#DSWORKS) to create employment opportunities for people with Down syndrome. Once the NDSS was on board, Proskauer lawyers handled all the legal work to establish the internship program and helped the NDSS raise money. In the 2016-17 hockey season, hockey fans saw two Even Strength interns at New Jersey Devils games greeting and ushering fans, among other roles. At the end of the 10-game program, the Devils extended offers to both interns to continue with their jobs through the remainder of the season. Currently, the Firm is working with the NDSS to expand the program to other teams in the NHL.

Jon, who was instrumental in making the connection with the NHL, a Firm client, and provided input on structuring the program, said, “The enthusiasm that Chad, David and Yoni have is contagious, and I am confident this program will be a tremendous success. I look forward to seeing Even Strength expand, with other teams joining the cause.” Chad commented, “I am so thankful that the Firm was open to this idea. It’s incredibly rewarding to be able to partner with a client to make a significant impact on the lives of those who have Down syndrome.”

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