

Philanthropy & Nonprofits

NBA Foundation awards grant to Boston nonprofit to train coaches



Shooting Touch is a Boston-based nonprofit that uses basketball to create opportunities for young girls both on and off the court

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Lindsey and Justin Kittredge both played college sports and understood, first-hand, the power of sport — its ability to bring people together and offer opportunity. After moving to Boston, the couple realized that being a part of a sports community is a "luxury" and is not accessible for many marginalized youth.

“We wanted to try to solve that problem,” said Lindsey Kittredge, co-founder and chief advancement officer of [Shooting Touch](#), a Boston-based nonprofit that uses basketball to elevate the health, education and opportunities for young girls of color — both on and off the court.

On Feb. 1, marking the first day of Black History Month, Shooting Touch received a grant from the [NBA Foundation](#), which was created August 2020. The foundation is the league’s first-ever charitable arm dedicated to driving economic opportunity for Black youth. Shooting Touch is the only Boston-based nonprofit that was awarded in this award round. The grant money will be used to focus on training future coaches for programming and providing opportunities for girls to gain internship experiences.

Shooting Touch has close connections with the Boston Celtics, and it was through that relationship that the nonprofit was recommended to foundation leaders, according to Greg Taylor, executive director of the NBA Foundation.

The NBA Foundation, created to support local and national organizations that promote workforce development opportunities for Black youth, [provided \\$12 million in grants to 31 organizations](#) serving Black youth in their most recent grant period, which included Shooting Touch.

Shooting Touch was awarded a "five figure grant," Taylor said. The exact amount that each organization was awarded is undisclosed.

The NBA Foundation does not release the individual grant numbers because the nonprofit thinks of the grant docket from a "cohort standpoint," Taylor said.

"We put a number out that really supports the entire cohort of the investment docket. We think about equity and access, and don't think the (individual) dollar amount is the only variable that underscores the impact of our support, and most importantly, the impact of the program, in this case, in the Boston community," he said.

Basketball bridging gaps

Husband and wife Lindsey and Justin noticed that accessibility to sports was not as readily available to young girls, especially young girls of color, in the Boston area. They created Shooting Touch in 2006 with the mission of using basketball as a way to bridge health and opportunity gaps within their communities.

Over the past 17 years, the nonprofit has created a domestic arm in Boston, where they have served over 300 girls of color ages nine to 17, and an international arm based in Rwanda.

The Kittredges knew that they wanted their organization to extend beyond just the sport.

"We love our girls playing this sport, and getting the free access to it. But we also need job opportunities and career pathways for our girls to succeed off the court," Lindsey said.

The nonprofit provides exposure to different academic institutions, internships, and a curriculum that focuses on economic upward mobility and gender empowerment. Additionally, their [Leadership Track fund](#) provides monetary donations to participants to pursue a professional or educational opportunity.

Shooting Touch selects four fellows to serve for seven months in Rwanda to help facilitate their year-round basketball programming, and assist in providing health education and services. These fellows engage with over 1,000 youth and nearly 2,000 women across six villages, according to the company.

Justin Kittredge is no stranger to the world of sports business. When they first opened their nonprofit, Justin was working for Reebok. Then, in 2013 he opened his own shoe company, [ISlide](#). While he continues to run his company, Lindsey left her job in the corporate world and is working on Shooting Touch full time. She recently passed the torch of executive director to Liza Gallagher this past December.