

# **Toyota and espnW Recognize 7th Class of Everyday Heroes at The espnW: Women + Sports Summit, 2022**

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**PLANO, Texas (Nov. 2, 2022)** – Last night at The espnW: Women + Sports Summit in Ojai, California, presented by Toyota, Toyota and espnW announced the seventh class of Toyota Everyday Heroes. Toyota’s Everyday Heroes program recognizes female individuals making a difference for women and girls in their local communities through sports. The Heroes were provided with grants in the amount of \$15,000 and recognized on-stage by Team Toyota Athlete and Paralympic gold medalist Jessica Long. Toyota has been a presenting sponsor of The espnW: Women + Sports Summit for 10 years.

“We’re inspired by these women’s stories, as they exemplify the true meaning of a ‘Hero’ in their communities,” said Angie White, senior manager of media, Toyota Motor North America. “Toyota is proud to announce the 2022 Everyday Heroes – Liz Ferro and Nzingha Prescod – and support their mission to make an impact for women and girls through sports.”

The two 2022 Toyota Everyday Heroes are:

**Liz Ferro (Girls With Sole – Cleveland, Ohio)**

Liz Ferro is the founder and CEO of the Girls With Sole. She started Girls With Sole (GWS) in 2009 as a way to help underprivileged girls facing difficult life circumstances. A survivor of foster care and abuse herself, Ferro believes that sports provided an escape and focus for her, saving her life. GWS provides free fitness sessions (such as running, hiking and basketball) and wellness programs (activities promoting friendship, self-esteem and more) to help at-risk girls facing the same issues she did.

Ferro runs all the programs herself with help from volunteers. While she has received grants and both monetary and in-kind donations, Ferro does much of her own fundraising from running marathons and competing in triathlons around the world. Liz has written two books, with all of the proceeds going to GWS. Over 1,000 girls have benefitted from GWS over the years, “lacing up for a lifetime of achievement,” as the GWS mantra goes.

**Nzingha Prescod (PISTE Academy – Brooklyn, New York)**

Growing up in East Flatbush, Brooklyn, Nzingha Prescod had extremely limited opportunities for after-school sports. Prescod’s mother discovered the Peter Westbrook Foundation, where she began fencing, resulting in an Ivy-League education and two Olympic berths.

In the summer of 2020, Nzingha started her “Fencing in the Park” program, and it rapidly grew into the Prescod Institute for Sport, Teamwork and Education (PISTE). Each year, 20-25 students participate and learn the mechanics of fencing, discipline, resilience and self-control. PISTE additionally offers school and community programs, 1:1 academic tutoring and other educational courses. In addition to PISTE, Nzingha has been working with the city of New York on legislation to create an Office of Sport for the city, a position designed to create more equitable opportunities for sports.

“We’re honored to partner with Toyota in showcasing the incredible and inspiring work of these Everyday Heroes,” said espnW founder Laura Gentile. “Through their remarkable leadership, resilience and dedication, they have created sports initiatives that mentor and inspire women and girls to dream bigger, live fuller lives and achieve their dreams.”

To qualify for a Toyota Everyday Heroes grant, a person and/or organization must:

- Have been operating as an active, sports-related organization for at least two years;
- Are currently creating sports opportunities for girls and women in their local communities, and making a meaningful, inspiring impact with quantifiable results.

Past Honorees:

- [2018](#) – Cecelie Owens (founder/president, G.I.R.L.S. Sports Foundation), Liz Brieva & Megan Livatino (founder & executive director, Girls Play Sports) and Melissa Clarke-Wharff (founder, Courage League Sports)
- [2017](#) – Darlene Hunter (founder, Lady Mavericks Wheelchair Basketball), Fartun Osman (founder, Somali Girls Rock) and Mira Manickam (founder, Brown Girl Surf)
- [2016](#) – Courtney Payne Taylor (founder, Girls Riders Organization), Tracy Pointer (founder, GROW/GROW Girl) and Beth Devine (founder, Philly Girls in Motion)
- [2015](#) – Chrissy Lewis-Summers (founder of Beyond Sticks) and Heidi Boynton (founder of Mini Mermaid Running Club)
- [2014](#) – Dr. Kimberley S. Clay (co-founder, Play Like a Girl!), Monica Gonzalez (founder, Gonzo Soccer) and Claire Smallwood (co-founder and Executive Director of SheJumps)
- [2013](#) – Barb Lazarus (founder, Game On! Foundation), Justine Siegal (founder, Baseball For All) and Mobolaji Akidoe (Hope 4 Girls Foundation)

*Updated November 3, 2022.*