

# Teen-run foundation empowers autism community through sport

BY DEACON FANCHER



Teammates Ethan Deloney (left) and Britain Broderick (right) discuss strategy at The Britain Foundation's five-on-five basketball tournament at Bellevue High School in Bellevue, Michigan. The two-day tournament hosted amateur, high school, and college-level teams to raise funds and awareness for autism.

Image courtesy of The Britain Foundation on Saturday, July 8, 2023.

After an autism diagnosis at 18 years old temporarily put his life on pause, Kellogg Community College student Britain Broderick said he needed a way to connect with other community members who were going through similar scenarios. Armed with personal experience, he created [The Britain Foundation](#); a platform, he said, that can be used to demonstrate autism as a personal strength, and help other people on the spectrum find proper care.

After turning to his father and a few high school friends for help, Broderick laid the framework for the operation. In February of 2023, The Britain Foundation was officially registered with the State of Michigan's Department of Attorney General as a nonprofit [organization](#).

Fascinated with team sports, Broderick said he wanted to use the games he had played since childhood to raise funds and awareness for his goal. This was first made possible by the foundation's organization of a five-on-five basketball tournament in July – an event that included seven teams from Genesee and Calhoun counties (two southern Michigan areas in which the foundation operates).

This two-day tournament served as an early model for the types of events that Broderick said he is planning for the future. With an estimated 60 players, volunteers and spectators involved, Broderick said he feels that the event was an overall success, despite changes that he said could be made to the organization process.

Having been established for less than a year, Broderick said that the roughly \$700 raised from the basketball tournament and outside donations mark a challenge that faces small operations like The Britain Foundation.

“The early development of the foundation makes it difficult to optimize our autism awareness and research,” Broderick said. “[We] have wonderful ideas, but do not have all the resources to implement [them].”

The resources that The Britain Foundation needs, he said, include a larger outreach, as well as an increase in partnerships with local businesses. Given that the foundation operates on connecting with local members of the autism community, having volunteers and business entities to interact with is crucial.

Another necessary resource - something that is not so easily granted with local connections - is time. Being a full-time student, Broderick said that it can be difficult to maintain the needs that the organization presents.

“Consistency is key in striving for innovative ways to best support the autism community,” Broderick said. “The Britain Foundation looks at autism through an insider perspective... previous forms of autism research did not have this unique perspective.

“The Britain Foundation must remain consistent, diligent and courageous in order to provide new forms of autism support,” he said.

Presently, the foundation is seeing an increased workload, something that comes with the end of the [IRS](#)’ calendar tax year.

“The Britain Foundation is currently focused on gathering the necessary paperwork to file our yearly report,” Broderick said. “Yearly reports, along with our federally-recognized [tax-exempt status](#) will allow [us] to get the most out of our planned 2024 fundraisers.”

The stress that comes with the running of a successful foundation is something that Broderick said he tries to manage in a number of ways. Along with consulting his fellow board members and journaling, he said that mentally reframing the demands of the organization helps to solve them.

“[We do] not dwell on the things we can’t do - rather, we focus on progressively improving what we can do,” Broderick said. “You can look at a foundation’s success through a business lens, but that’s not why I started [this].

“Obviously, The Britain Foundation strives for bigger goals, but I would view this organization as a success if I help one person with autism,” he said. “I did not want to fear being proactive because of self-doubt of how successful the foundation could be.”

Through the obstacles that come from both the organization and his personal life, Broderick said he’s continuing to remain transparent, so that his challenges can be [shared](#) with others.

“I wanted to take my personal experience and share it with the community, so that those with autism can interpret my anecdotal findings,” he said. “While helping one person may be a small change, it is a positive change.”