

## Netball America: Igniting Passion, Championing Diversity, Inspiring Greatness.

Netball America is committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in all aspects of our organization. As the incoming President of Netball America I will ensure we continue to foster an inclusive environment that embraces individuals of all backgrounds, identities, and orientations, especially within the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities. Netball America is one of the few organizations who has members of all diversities and cultures, including members who identify as transgender, non-binary, and from various gender expressions, as well as immigrants, African Americans, Asian-Americans, Black and Caribbean, who are contributing to a truly representative and welcoming community. This is due to Netball being a popular sport in the country where they are from and they are able to celebrate their diversity and coming together as a community of netball players right here in the USA!

Our commitment to DEI extends beyond representation within our leadership and volunteers. We actively work to create opportunities for underserved and minority youth, particularly BIPOC youth, to participate in Netball. We recognize the historical and systemic barriers that these communities have faced, and through strategic partnerships, outreach programs, and initiatives, we aim to provide equitable access to the sport.

By engaging underserved and minority youth, we provide them with a supportive platform in Netball to develop essential life skills, foster teamwork, and build self-confidence. Our programs promote cultural understanding, mutual respect, and inclusivity on and off the court, instilling values that extend beyond the game. This is especially true given netball is one of the few true team sports that exist today.

The biggest hurdle I've had to overcome was learning about being a minority in a new country (I moved from the UK to the USA) and the culture differences as well both on and off the sporting field. Especially in the game of golf (as a collegiate golf athlete) where it is predominantly a sport played by white males.

I now have the opportunity to teach other minorities, especially girls, and show them a new sport they may not have thought about nor the opportunities and people it brings into your life. Golf and Netball have taken me all over the world and I'm thankful for all the life lessons it has taught me.

## NA-Thomas

Natasha Ainsley-Thomas President, Netball America Email: Natasha@NetballAmerica.com

