

## EDITOR'S NOTE

**S**ports are important in the United States. (Some might say they are too important when they consider what we pay our top professional athletes.) And sports are important in many other parts of the world as well.

The international regard for sports is apparent in the fact that the United Nations (UN) designated 2005 as the International Year of Sport and Physical Education. The UN General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the use of sports to promote development and peace. This seems a reasonable goal because, as UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said, "Sport is a universal language. At its best it can bring people together, no matter what their origin, background, religious beliefs or economic status."

Each country promotes sports in its own way. Many of the countries in which our readers reside have sports ministries, while the United States has the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. This council originated in 1956 as the President's Council on Youth Fitness, created by President Dwight Eisenhower to improve the fitness of young people. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy changed the name to the President's Council on Physical Fitness to include people of all ages. Today the council organizes programs, supplies fitness information, and offers awards to encourage all Americans to engage in regular physical activity to improve their health.

Physical activities and sports are depicted in the photos that appear in (and on the cover of) this issue of *English Teaching Forum*. The lesson plan that accompanies the photos outlines several classroom activities to prompt students to think, speak, and write about sports. The photos in this issue of *Forum* represent only a few of the many sports and physical activities people engage in throughout the world, so we encourage teachers to adapt the classroom activities to include sports that are popular in their own countries or regions. And perhaps studying sports in the classroom will inspire students to increase their participation in sports and physical activities outside of school.

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