

Young Ambassador Seminar

Be part of Innsbruck 2012



Young Ambassador Seminar in Innsbruck

For the 1st Winter Youth Olympic Games, 33 Young Ambassadors from around the globe have been selected to help the athletes participating in the Games discover and live the Olympic Values Excellence, Respect and Friendship. These Ambassadors were invited to Innsbruck at the start of September to take part in a training seminar including workshops, discussions, team-building activities and plenty more besides. Indeed, if there was one thing that was missing during the Young Ambassador Seminar it was the chance to sleep!

As well as spreading the spirit of the Youth Olympic Games, the Young Ambassadors' main task is to prepare their athletes for the Innsbruck 2012 Culture & Education Programme (CEP). During the Seminar, the 33 youngsters got an exclusive preview of the Culture & Education Programme and had the chance to try out some of the CEP activities which will be on offer during the Games in January 2012. However, the journey to Innsbruck alone proved a true odyssey for some of the Young Ambassadors. For example, Sarah from New Zealand needed no fewer than five flights and 21 hours to get from the tip of the Southern Hemisphere to the regional capital of Tyrol. And with Ambassadors representing everywhere from Australia to Chile and Canada to Japan in attendance, she certainly wasn't the only one who had jetted half way around the world to be in Innsbruck for the Young Ambassador Seminar.

After such long, arduous journeys, the official Welcome Dinner – complete with accordion player and dancers performing the traditional Austrian 'Schuhplattler' dance – was the perfect chance for the Young Ambassadors to shake off any remaining jet-lag and immerse themselves in Tyrolean culture. Just as during the Seminar itself, the guests at the Welcome Dinner were encouraged to get involved at every opportunity – not least on the dance floor! After seeing their moves, we reckon that Lea from Slovenia and Aliona from Lithuania *must* have Tyrolean roots – after all, how else could they have learned all the right dance steps so quickly? Straight after the Welcome Dinner the group headed out for the first 'venue tour' of the weekend – an expedition into Innsbruck's nightlife via the city's main bars. Suffice to say, much fun was had by all! 😊

Bright and early next morning the Ambassadors gathered to try out the different CEP activities for themselves. As well as finding out more about the activities in order to be able to support the athletes in January 2012, they were also encouraged to make suggestions about how the individual seminars and workshops could be improved between now and Games-time. From getting down to the beat together in the Drumming Workshop to exploring the mountains of the Nordkette under a cloudless sky, all of the activities were characterised by fun, laughter and a real sense of team spirit, marking the start of many friendships.

However, the aim of the Seminar was not only to give the Young Ambassadors the chance to try out the CEP. Another important aspect was to learn more about the Young Ambassadors' role in general and their mission for the Youth Olympic Games in Innsbruck. On hand to provide an overview of the Young Ambassador Programme was none other than IOC Executive Director Gilbert Felli, the man responsible for the organisation of all Olympic Games. "Singapore blazed the trail for the Youth Olympic Games," Felli told the Young Ambassadors. "Now it is down to us to take the next steps



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along this trail.” To help them with their task during the Games, the IOC brought along a few surprises, including a cool outfit, useful accessories and the latest technological gizmos.

The Young Ambassador Seminar was over far too quickly, and despite only having met four days earlier, there were many heavy hearts among the participants when the time came to say good-bye. However, it won't be long until the Young Ambassadors are back together in Innsbruck for the Games, and in the meantime they will be working hard in their home countries to promote the 1st Winter Youth Olympic Games. Innsbruck 2012 – Be part of it!

