
For Immediate Release

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Contact: media@safesport.org**U.S. Center for SafeSport Announces New Board Chair,
Gold Medalist April Holmes***Holmes takes helm of Board of Directors from outgoing Board Chair
Jessica Herrera-Flanigan*

Denver, CO – The U.S. Center for SafeSport (the Center) today announced the appointment of the new Chairperson of its Board of Directors, Paralympic gold medalist April Holmes. After serving as Vice Board Chair and Athletic Director, Holmes takes over for outgoing Chair Jessica Herrera-Flanigan.

Holmes is the first athlete and first Paralympian to serve as Chair of the Center’s Board of Directors.

The Center, a 501(c)3, is overseen by a Board of Directors, which includes several elite athletes as well as sport-engaged professionals in capacities that include ethics, compliance, equity, health, and safety. Board Members advise the Center on core business functions, long-term sustainability, strategic planning, and regularly evaluate the Center’s performance through its outcomes and metrics. The Board also approves the annual budget, audit reports, and material business decisions, ensuring all legal and fiduciary requirements are met.

“As the first athlete and Paralympian to serve as the U.S. Center for SafeSport Board Chair, I see it as my duty to give back to the young people coming up behind me and my responsibility to demonstrate what representation and inclusive leadership look like,” April Holmes said. **“It is an honor to be selected by my fellow Board Members for this important role, and I look forward to working with them to ensure the Center remains focused on trust, independence, accountability, and continuous improvement. I am grateful to accept the baton from Jessica and thank her for her leadership.”**

Learn more about Holmes through the Center’s [Voice of a Champion Series](#).

Hear Holmes’ thoughts on [amplifying athlete voices](#) and representation.

Herrera-Flanigan has served on the Board since the Center’s inception, led the nominating and governance committee, and served the last two and a half years as Board Chair.

“When the Center opened its doors in 2017, the Inaugural Board knew we had a significant lift in building a culture of athlete safety grounded in trust, independence, and accountability,” Jessica Herrera-Flanigan said. **“I’m proud of the progress we have made and have been honored to work**

with Ju’Riese, the Board, and the Center’s excellent staff through the years. While professional obligations made it necessary for me to step down from the Board, I am thrilled that we have chosen such a trailblazing leader and role model in April as the next Chair.”

Hear from Jessica Herrera-Flanigan on what it takes to drive sport culture change on the Center’s [Champion in Every Corner Podcast Series](#).

“The Center has benefitted from the visionary Board leadership of Jessica Herrera-Flanigan, and we are grateful for her contributions to advancing athlete safety over the years,” Ju’Riese Colón, CEO, U.S. Center for SafeSport said. **“The Board’s selection of April as Chair demonstrates the importance of including the unique experiences of athletes in our work to end abuse.”**

About April Holmes

April Holmes is a Paralympic gold medalist, speaker, and executive coach who speaks out regularly her about experiences overcoming adversity to achieve athletic success. After losing part of her left leg in an accident in 2001, she rebounded to become one of the century’s most accomplished athletes with four Paralympic Games appearances, three Paralympic medals (one gold, two bronze), six World Championship medals, and more than a dozen world and U.S. record performances in the 100-meter, 200-meter, and long-jump events. She is the cofounder and CEO of HeroHangout, an online learning community for mentoring, engaging, and empowering youth through life experiences.

About Jessica Herrera-Flanigan

An experienced and trusted senior corporate executive, board member, and government leader, Jessica Herrera-Flanigan advises c-suites, associations, and non-profits on corporate and public affairs. Jessica served as the Vice President of Public Policy & Philanthropy, Americas at Twitter, and prior to that, as Executive Vice President of Government & Corporate Affairs at Univision. Jessica spent part of her career as the Staff Director & General Counsel of the House Committee on Homeland Security. In that position, she was the first Latina staffer to head up a Congressional committee. She also spent several years at the U.S. Department of Justice in the Computer Crime & IP Section, where she co-led a prosecutorial and investigative team specializing in cybercrimes and also represented the United States internationally at APEC, OAS, and OECD and served as a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney on Fraud & Public Corruption cases.

Need for Abuse Prevention in Sport

The U.S. Center for SafeSport is the nation’s only independent organization dedicated to ending sexual, physical, and emotional abuse in U.S. Olympic and Paralympic sport. The Center emerged in response to high profile cases of sexual abuse of minor athletes within Olympic and Paralympic sport in the mid-2010s. With the mission of making athlete wellbeing the centerpiece of the nation’s sport culture, the Center has since been setting safety policies and receiving, investigating, and resolving complaints of abuse and misconduct. The Center also serves as an educational resource for sports organizations at all levels, from recreational sports organizations to professional leagues.

With the goal of ensuring athletes within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement are safe, supported, and strengthened, the Center:

- establishes safety policies, including the [SafeSport Code](#) and the [Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies \(MAAPP\)](#);
- investigates and resolves allegations of abuse and misconduct in a neutral manner, and levies sanctions, including temporary and permanent bans from sport; and
- delivers comprehensive abuse prevention education within and outside of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement.

About the U.S. Center for SafeSport

The Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 codified the U.S. Center for SafeSport (the Center), a Denver, Colorado based 501(c)(3) nonprofit, as the nation's safe sport organization. It furthered the Center's independence while underscoring its authority to hold individuals accountable. It also charged the Center with developing policies, procedures, and training to prevent abuse and misconduct to protect the 11 million individuals affiliated with the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement.

In October of 2020, the Empowering Olympic, Paralympic, and Amateur Athletes Act of 2020 became law, even further strengthening the Center's independence and oversight functions while mandating minimum funding requirements for the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee.

The Center opened its doors in March of 2017.

Reporting Abuse

[Report here](#) to the U.S. Center for SafeSport if you have experienced abuse or misconduct—or if you have reasonable suspicion of abuse or misconduct inflicted on, or by, someone in the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement. You can also call 833-587-7233 to make a report.

If a situation does not involve sport or anyone within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement, you can contact [RAINN's 24/7 online hotline](#) or call 800-656-HOPE (4673).

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