

Shoot the Ball hits the NBA All-Star weekend 🇺🇸

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Here's a sampling from The Ball's travels with Noel and Angelina Andreoni during the NBA All-Star week in New Orleans.

An impressive run, to say the least . . . For more on the Shoot the Ball campaign, check out www.shoottheball.net.

Sunday - arrived in New Orleans. Checked into the Ritz Carlton.

Monday - Spoke at a Boys & Girls Club. The kids varied from grades 4 - 8. There is a bridge that connects the City of New Orleans

and the neighbourhood that these kids live in. Some of them have never even been over that bridge. Needless to say, it was very rewarding being able to share some of our stories from around the globe and Canada, After the presentation,

everyone received a basketball from SPALDING, which made them all crazy! It was this day that we learned people from the

NBA knew about our project, which was a surprise to us.

Tuesday - Drove around the city of New Orleans giving away SPALDING NEVERFLAT basketballs.

We hit the French Quarter, the Business District and local neighbourhoods.

At noon, we stopped by the NBC building for a live TV interview.

Throughout the week, we had people approaching us, saying they saw our story.

Wednesday - Drove around the city, giving away more basketballs. Returned to the Boys & Girls Club to present to a different group of kids,

however many of the kids from Monday returned as well to sit through the pictures and stories again.

Thursday - Had to move out of the Ritz; we think Michael Jordan was getting our room...or maybe it was our floor...

At our new hotel, \$169/night, we approached the desk at check-in armed with basketballs and gave them to the staff. Apparently they had a basketball rate as our new price/night went down to \$79. In the afternoon, we went to Jam Session at the Convention Center.

All of the NBA sponsors are there and many of them have their own full size courts. We believe that there was enough room for 38 courts.

Spalding had a court set up and we spent most of our time there as there were scheduled appearances by NBA legends.

BJ Armsrong was the first to come by and he shot THE BALL. To the surprise of even the Spalding people, Commissioner David Stern made an appearance. We were introduced to him and had a two minute conversation regarding the project.

Angelina shared a funny story with him and he replied with a similar story of his own. We were sure that while we were talking to Mr. Stern,

the Spalding people were thinking to themselves, please don't embarrass us, please don't embarrass us! However, it was a fun encounter and

Commissioner Stern even posed with THE BALL! Later in the day, Rick Barry stopped by and was kind enough to shoot THE BALL.

He went to the free throw line and shot underhanded - all net. It was awesome!

That evening we received surprise invitations to special event. Zo's and Magic's Eight Ball Challenge - to benefit The Alonzo Mourning Charities and

The Magic Johnson Foundation. Within moments of entering the huge venue, we ran into Magic Johnson, then Alonzo Mourning, then

Dr. J, then Danny Glover, then Gabrielle Union, then Ludacris, then Paul Pierce. All of them were extremely friendly and took the time to

listen to the story of THE BALL and then stop for a photo.

Friday - Took part in A Day of Service, sponsored by NBA Cares. This was a huge volunteer effort set up by NBA Cares to help different areas of the city;

we were assigned to Capdau School. Former NBA players, Tim Hardaway and Detlef Schremph were there as well as American Idol, Taylor Hicks.

If anyone saw footage of the event, more specifically, Yao Ming laying sod, that was our school. We had the morning shift and Yao Ming and Jet Li were there

in the afternoon. One of our jobs was putting up a new basketball hoop on the outdoor court. Before we left New Orleans on Monday, we returned to

Capdau to see the finished product and to get the principal to shoot THE BALL on the hoop we helped to erect.

Saturday - Becky Hammon shot THE BALL; the first WNBA player to do so. Later, Darryl Dawkins got his hands on THE BALL,

which looked like a tennis ball when he was holding it! In the evening, we went to the New Orleans Arena and saw Dwight Howard put on a dunk show! It was an incredible night!

Sunday - We met George Gervin at Jam Session, another NBA legend. By the end of the week, four of the 50 best NBA players ever,

got their hands on THE BALL. Sunday evening we attended the big game. Not a bad week.....