

Former NFL Star Uses Fame to Make a Kingdom Impact

Recent reports indicate that over 5 million people have died globally from the coronavirus pandemic in under two years, with millions more suffering from hunger, lack of medical care and other support. As people living in poor and conflict-affected nations are suffering most of all, many are looking for ways to aid those most impacted by the pandemic.

This mission is spearheaded by Compassion International and its Fill the Stadium () initiative to assist in providing essential food, medical care and support to impoverished children and their families. Partnering with top athletes to bring awareness to this global issue, Compassion is determined to feed 70,000 children around the world, which is the average size of an NFL stadium.

One top proponent of the Fill the Stadium initiative is former NFL quarterback Carson Palmer. Palmer committed to donating \$300,000 himself—and challenged others to match that donation. But while the Fill the Stadium initiative has gained massive support, the effort is not yet complete. Compassion's CEO Santiago "Jimmy" Mellado is determined to achieve Fill the Stadium's goal of helping all 70,000 children in crisis. The team has raised over \$33 million so far, reaching more than 66,000 kids and their families, but they must "fill the stadium"—and reach all 70,000 kids at grave risk of hunger, or worse.

Mellado explains, "We are committed to caring for 70,000 children who were not sponsored due to the pandemic, which is enough children to fill an average NFL football stadium. At Compassion, we believe the empty stadiums at NFL games last season were a sobering reminder of those who still need essential food, health care and support as this crisis

continues.”

In the COVID-19 era, “We have all experienced the reality of empty stadiums,” says the Fill the Stadium team. “The average NFL stadium holds 70,000 seats. We need to reach that many kids. This effort desperately needs a caring, prayerful and thoughtful community to join together in this critical relief.”

In addition to Palmer, those holding co-leadership roles in this charitable team effort are Alyssa Naeher, a member of the U.S. Olympic Women’s Soccer Team (which won a bronze medal in Tokyo); Nick Foles, professional football MVP quarterback; Adam Engel of the Chicago White Sox; Sam Burns, PGA TOUR golfer; Nick Ahmed of the Arizona Diamondbacks; Jordy Nelson, former professional wide receiver; Devin and Jason McCourty, NFL defensive backs; Nate Solder of the New York Giants; Jaccob Slavin of the Carolina Hurricanes; Brock Huard, Fox sports broadcaster and former professional quarterback; and many others. Steve Stenstrom, president of Pro Athletes Outreach, is also playing a lead role in the effort.

To learn more about this effort, visit the Fill the Stadium website, as well as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. {eoa}

*Founded in 1952, **Compassion International** is a Christian child development organization that works to release children from poverty in Jesus’ name. Compassion revolutionized the fight against global poverty by working exclusively with the church to lift children out of spiritual, economic, social, and physical poverty. Compassion partners with more than 8,000 churches in 25 countries to deliver its holistic child development program to over 2 million babies, children and young adults. Its child sponsorship program has been validated through independent, empirical research.*