

# A TOUCHDOWN IN PHILANTHROPY

Danny Amendola brings sports, education and charity together by launching the Catches for Kids foundation in Boston.

BY JILLIAN RINEHIMER

The beginning of fall brings a fresh school year and a new football season. So, why not combine the two? The New England Patriots' wide receiver, Danny Amendola, has done just that. When Amendola was traded to the Patriots from the St. Louis Rams in 2013, he didn't just bring his football skills with him. He brought philanthropy to the team with the Catches for Kids foundation.

Amendola took over the Catches for Kids foundation four years ago in St. Louis after his former Rams teammate was traded. The Catches for Kids Foundation is a charity that started in 2010 to support children from low-income families by offering inspiration and opportunity to grow to their full potential.

Education and sports were relevant throughout Amendola's childhood. His father was a high school football coach and his mother was a substitute teacher. Amendola mentioned how his background not only explains how he shares the students' passion, but how he also understands it.

This inspired him to take over the foundation and partner up with Prolanthropy, an organization dedicated to helping professional athletes share their charitable interests. With the basis of opportunity as a driving force, Amendola and COO of Prolanthropy, Ken Taylor, teamed up to ensure the best support was provided in order to help school kids succeed.

Cathedral High School is the first school in the Boston area that Catches for Kids supports. "The kids have an opportunity to become whatever they want. I talked to a lot of them and a lot of them play sports, a lot of them play soccer, play basketball, play softball," explained Amendola. "And when I was a young kid in high school and middle school that is all I wanted to do was play sports and get an education."

On September 3rd, the foundation held their first event since its Boston launch in May of this year. The Back to School with Cathedral High School event presented 120 students with the chance to attend the Patriots' afternoon practice before heading to Walpole Walmart with Amendola. Once there, the students lined up to receive a backpack full of school essentials and a \$50 Walmart gift card.

One-by-one, Amendola handed out the backpacks to the students, signed autographs, snapped selfies and sent them off to browse the store with warm wishes for an inspirational school year.

"I got the opportunity to go to a college to play football and get an education," said the Texas Tech University alum. "It's an opportunity that I ran with and hopefully these kids can run with too." The smiles of the kids patiently waiting in line, running through the aisles to use up their gift cards and leaving the store after the event showed their appreciation for the program and for Amendola's time.

"The most inspiring story I've had from Catches for Kids is probably just giving opportunity," said Amendola. "I mean just the fact that we're moving from city to city, from St. Louis to Boston, spreading the love, spreading the chance to give kids whatever opportunity they need to make education as smooth as possible."

The wide receiver signed a five-year contract with the Patriots in March 2013, so the city can anticipate more events in the future.

"In five years, I mean I would like to be in Boston and kind of plant our roots deeper into the ground here. We're just getting started so we're all eager to watch it grow and go from there."

For more information about the Catches for Kids foundation, managed by Prolanthropy, check out [dannyamendola.org](http://dannyamendola.org) or [prolanthropy.net](http://prolanthropy.net)



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