

## Obacha Launches Shoe Drive for Nigeria

Written by Ryan Bower

Thursday, 09 January 2014 17:44

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As a native of a country where nearly 70 percent of the population lives in poverty, Appalachian State men's basketball player Michael Obacha (Edo State, Nigeria/High Point Christian) has seen firsthand the

needs of his fellow countrymen and women.

Growing up in Kaduna State, Nigeria, Obacha was often forced off the basketball courts for one simple reason - he did not have the proper footwear to play.

"In the United States and many other countries, it's easy for people to get a new pair of shoes whenever their old ones begin to fall apart," said Obacha. "But in Nigeria, it's rare for children to have the resources to get a new pair of shoes. Once one pair is worn out, they can no longer play the game they love."

In the fall, Obacha began asking friends and family to donate shoes, either new or gently used, to take back to Nigeria when he returns this summer. His plan was to give those shoes to children in need - but his plans took a new turn in December.

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After reading about his efforts to help children in Nigeria, Obacha was contacted by former Davidson star and fellow Nigerian Andrew Lovedale. During his playing days with the Wildcats, Lovedale launched his own shoe drive in 2009 and later founded the Access 2 Success Foundation to help provide a variety of charitable services to the people of Nigeria.

Through a series of emails and phone calls, Lovedale expressed his desire to help Obacha in his goal of bringing shoes and smiles to the children of Nigeria.

“One of the main things I want to do is put a smile on the face of every child who gets shoes,” said Obacha. “We often take our blessings for granted, but something as simple as a new pair of shoes brings so much joy to these children and allows them to play the game they love.”

Beginning with Appalachian’s men’s basketball game on Jan. 9 against UNCG, and for all remaining home games. Obacha and Appalachian athletics are asking for YOUR help in making his vision a reality.

Fans are asked to bring a pair of new or gently-used athletic shoes (basketball or other) to each remaining men’s basketball contest at the Holmes Center. In exchange each pair of shoes, fans will receive a pair of tickets to that day’s game.

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Shoes will be collected at the ticket windows at the northwest and southwest entrances of the Holmes Center. Fans are asked to donate shoes in any size suitable for infant through high-school age - simply give your pair of shoes at the ticket window and get free tickets to Mountaineer basketball!

In addition, monetary donations to assist in the shipment of the shoes will be accepted online, where fans can donate visiting <http://a2sfoundation.org/mya2s/campaigns?c=53>. It is estimated that \$5 must be raised for each pair of shoes to be sent to Nigeria.

The campaign's current donation goal is 500 pairs of shoes and \$2,500 to help with shipping - but more shoes and donations are always welcome!

For more information, contact associate sports information director Ryan Bower at [bowerrp@appstate.edu](mailto:bowerrp@appstate.edu) or 828-262-7162.

Fans wishing to donate shoes but unable to bring them in person to the Holmes Center can

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send them to:

**Michael Obacha Shoe Drive**

**C/O Ryan Bower**

**425 Jack Branch Drive**

**Boone, N.C. 28608**

**Photo Courtesy: Michael OBacha, ASU Athletics**