

SPORTSMONEY

The Heart Supply Inaugurates Skatepark At Xala Development In Mexico With Olympic Skateboarder Jagger Eaton

Michelle Bruton Dec 14, 2021



Children from the local community in Costalegre, Mexico, learn to skateboard at the new Xala

One of the lasting impacts of skateboarding's Olympic debut this summer in Tokyo has been the world reevaluating its definitions of who skateboarders are. A sport that has been maligned and othered for decades entered the mainstream, revealing diverse competitors ranging in age from 12 years old to 46.

But for as many talented young skateboarders who competed in the Tokyo Games, there are far more across the world who may have that same innate talent and drive to skateboard on a professional level, but lack the resources or access to progress in the sport.

The Heart Supply, a skateboarding brand established in 2020 by Element founders Johnny



The Heart Supply skateboarder and Olympic medalist Jagger Eaton teaches children how to skateboard

and Kori Schillereff and their children Lenox and Camp, is working on changing that.

On December 10, Schillereff and The Heart Supply worked with real estate developer Ricardo Santa Cruz to inaugurate a community skatepark at Santa Cruz's new development, Xala, in Costalegre, Mexico.

Santa Cruz's aim in developing Xala was to attract socially conscious travelers and create a sustainable community in Costalegre, including a working hacienda, boutique hotels, a turtle sanctuary, a water project and wildlife habitats, as well as sports offerings for the local community, including a soccer team and the skatepark.

The skatepark is free to the public, and at the inauguration event with The Heart Supply over the weekend, Schillereff and his team set the local community up with 100 donated boards.

Nearly 30 years after founding Element, one of the industry's most successful brands, Schillereff wanted to shift his focus to making skateboarding more inclusive and affordable. He and his family founded The Heart Supply with the intention of donating a portion of proceeds to giving kids around the world skateboards.

"How many skateboards can we get under kids' feet and introduce them to skateboarding culture?" is how Schillereff describes the philosophy behind The Heart Supply. "Skateboarding provides them this opportunity to be part of the most beautiful activity in the world, but also, those kids will grow up and be skaters and feed the rest of the industry," he said.

Growing up with a father who was in the military and spending a lot of time around the United States and in Europe, Schillereff, a former pro skater sponsored by Vans, always had a global view of skateboarding.

That foundational belief was reflected during his tenure at Element and it's at the core of The Heart Supply, which sponsors Olympians Jagger Eaton and Heimana Reynolds; 14-year-old rising star Mia Lovell; Schillereff's 16-year-old son, Camp; Puerto Rican skateboarder Rio Baton; and Eaton's younger brother, Koston, who has yet to turn pro.

"I always was very open minded, knowing it's not always sunny Southern California where we make product and shoot videos and pick up athletes; they should be from around the world," Schillereff told me. "Having been brought into skateboarding by my big sister who taught me how to skate when I was young-



The brand-new skate park at Xala in the heart symbol shape used by The Heart Supply

er, it gave me a different sort of view on who skates and who should skate. We [at Element] were one of the first people to turn a female skateboarder pro and have a video part, and it opened my eyes to how to create brands.”

In June 2021, two months before skateboarding entered the Olympic spotlight, The Heart Supply and TargetTGT +0.5% announced a deal for the retail giant to carry Eaton’s and Reynolds’ signature decks, as well as complete skateboards. The Target-exclusive models launched in the mass market 30 days before the Tokyo Games, but the skaters had pro models out in the core market prior to that.

If you can’t remember ever having seen a skateboard at a mass retailer, you’re probably correct. There has long been a divide between core retailers and mass retailers when it comes to skateboarding hard goods (and even soft goods, outside apparel giants like NikeNKE +0.8% and Adidas). But in keeping with Schillereff’s aim of getting as many skateboards under kids’ feet as possible, The Heart Supply is meeting kids where they are when, rather than selling their products exclusively at skate shops.

As for teaming up with Santa Cruz on Xala, Schillereff saw it as a natural progression for his young company given the shared values between the two enterprises.

“It became very important to to me to make sure what I was doing in my life and with my family and

with my athletes was consistent with my personal beliefs and ethos. That was The Heart Supply,” Schillereff said. “I bumped into Ricardo Santa Cruz—the project he was doing almost simultaneously as we were starting The Heart Supply, Xala, was becoming a real thing. I realized how much there was in common with Xala’s core values and The Heart Supply’s, and it became so obvious they were the same and we really should probably work together.”

With the Heart Park skatepark concept at Xala, Schillereff sees an important gathering place for locals and tourists alike to gather over a shared common bond: skateboarding.

“We hope other people mirror this concept and show these communities that these cultures can interact; it’s so important for the locals and also the guests of Xala to flourish together,” Schillereff said. “Skateparks in inner cities do the same thing; kids from from all over the city and the suburbs interact and see what they do have in common and how they can coexist, and the same thing should be happening all around the world and outside the cities, where is where Xala comes into play.”

Working with Schillereff to inaugurate the skatepark and put on a clinic for the local community was Eaton, who won bronze in men’s skateboarding street at the Tokyo Games this summer and most recently won the Street League Skateboarding Super Crown world championship. Rio Batan and Camp Schillereff also attended and helped teach local



kids skateboarding skills.

Eaton's family owns and operates Arizona's KTR Family Action Sports Center, one of the first skateboarding training centers in the United States. Eaton's father, Geoff, actually started the business as a gymnastics training facility, but when Jagger and his siblings demonstrated a stronger interest in skateboarding, Geoff followed suit. So coaching runs deep in the Eaton genes.

"Why I love this project so much is that it's exactly the way I was raised; we were raised on coaching and teaching the youngins," Eaton said. "That's what gets me so excited about this whole project. There's a lot of kids who have never stepped foot on a skateboard."

Skateboarding is a family business for the Eatons just as it is for the Schillereffs, so having Jagger join The Heart Supply team was a no-brainer.

"The fact that his father was so deeply involved with his career, the fact that his family was so supportive of his career, really embodies where skateboarding is going," Schillereff said. "He's one of the first top skaters to have grown up in what might be considered skateboarding today—parents take them to the park, they skate wearing helmets, they have instructors. Jagger is one of the new gen-

eration guys; I think he is a great representation of where skateboarding is going, not necessarily where skateboarding was."

Having his younger brother, Koston—who Jagger has described as his favorite skater in the world—on The Heart Supply team with him has been a realization of a dream for the elder sibling. "It means the world to me," Jagger said. But Jagger is a true competitor at heart—"I put him on the level of the Tiger Woodses and Kobe Bryants and Michael Jordans of the world," Schillereff said. "The level of discipline it takes to be someone like Jagger is no joke."

So when Koston does finally turn pro for The Heart Supply, "Don't think he is gonna get any breaks," Jagger said with a laugh.

The inauguration of Heart Park welcomed 81 kids from the local community in Costalegre, with 100 skateboards donated. The Reforest Project, which has partnered with Xala, also attended the Heart Park launch event and will be reforesting an area to balance the environmental impact of building the skatepark and manufacturing the donated boards.

The skatepark will open to the public on January 15. The first phase of the greater Xala project will open in 2023.