

Olympic Essence

The lithe female gymnasts tumbled and twirled far below. Each gymnast's flowing movements hypnotized the spectators. The audience erupted in cheers whenever a gymnast triumphantly nailed her routine and gave a collective sigh of sympathy when she stumbled. It was the peak of the Olympic season. With the last memories of the opening ceremony fading, fans screamed encouragement for their countries' teams, all of them hungry for gold medals.

The triumphs were abundant, from the broken records to individual victories, from Michael Phelps's eight gold medals to Kenya's first marathon gold. Yet, the true importance of the Olympics rests with its motto: "One World One Dream", a motto that pleads for unity among nations and suspension of political strife. They symbolize a belief stretching back to the first Grecian Olympics. The Olympic Games are one of the very few events that invite many nations to compete on an even, fair field of competition. By engaging in sporting events in this Olympic environment, nations worldwide can celebrate a new world record, cheer on a sprinting racer, or view with fascination the timeless grace of a gymnast. In a world full of conflict and chaos, the Olympics offer sixteen days of unanimity between all nations, regardless of language, race or religion.

As the Olympic torch was extinguished in the August of 2008, I realized that, although the countries spend most of their time calculating how many gold medals were won, *the pure essence of the Olympics lies in the harmony among all the participants: to unite for a brief moment and enjoy a welcome peace.*