



LazyTown

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An interview with Magnus Scheving

Magnus Scheving, the creator of *LazyTown*, talks about the show and about how parents can encourage their kids to be more active.

Q: What is the mission of *LazyTown*?

A: The overarching goal of *LazyTown* is to motivate kids to live healthier lives. I was motivated by kids and I learned from them just how excited they were when they made positive changes in their lives.

We believe that the best way to get kids to understand this is to inspire them and lead by example. *LazyTown* delivers positive, healthy messages in an entertaining way. We want to empower kids to get out there and do things that they haven't done before.

Q: What was the inspiration for the town and for the different citizens?

A: Really, when you get down to it, *LazyTown* is a state of mind. We've all been to *LazyTown*. When we decide to "veg-out" on the couch, you could say you're "in *LazyTown*." Even me. It's a place we all go.

In a funny way, *LazyTown* reflects characteristics that you see in yourself or in people around you. These characters are universal: It's that dynamic of opposites.

For instance, in the show, Sportacus is a driving force. He's fit, agile, and an amazing athlete who's patient, kind, and understanding. He encourages kids through example. He doesn't take the low road. Conversely, his adversary, Rotten, is all about easy solutions and pulling the group down to his level. Then there's Stephanie, the lead kid character, a wide-eyed optimist who believes she can make a real difference; while Pixel, a boy character, can conquer every video game, but when the situations are real, he has a harder time.

Just like in real life, nobody's perfect and *LazyTown*ers are constantly trying to find ways to understand and improve themselves. I guess that you could say that *LazyTown* explores the opposing forces that we encounter in our own lives.

Q: Why do you think *LazyTown* has become such a success in Iceland?

A: I think that part of it is that children recognize themselves or someone they know in the *LazyTown* characters as relatable. And kids want to make progress in the same fun way. Also, *LazyTown* is appealing to kids because of the action-adventure at their level. They like its mix of energy, music, comedy, and funny characters.

Q: Do you ever worry about your own children being lazy?

A: I don't worry about my children being lazy. I try to get involved in their activities, and often we do fun things that get them up and moving. For example, we might do a short disco dance competition before dinner. It's fun to see things kids do, and when you get down to their level and their way of thinking you experience so many things that you would otherwise not notice.

Q: Any suggestions for parents who want to help their kids be more active every day?

A: *LazyTown* actually strives to encourage parents and caretakers to be involved and active with their children every day. It's very important that parents experience their trial, error, and also their improvements.

It sounds pretty obvious, but physical activity makes a huge difference in family life. It creates a bond that nothing else can. We want to motivate kids and parents, but also help them to understand that they don't have to go to extremes to go. Take the first steps.

But we aren't saying that kids or their parents should be overly programmed. It's just about being able to get out and do stuff. It's all about creating balance. There's a time when it is good to be active and there is a time for kids to relax. Go to *LazyTown* for a while--then come back!