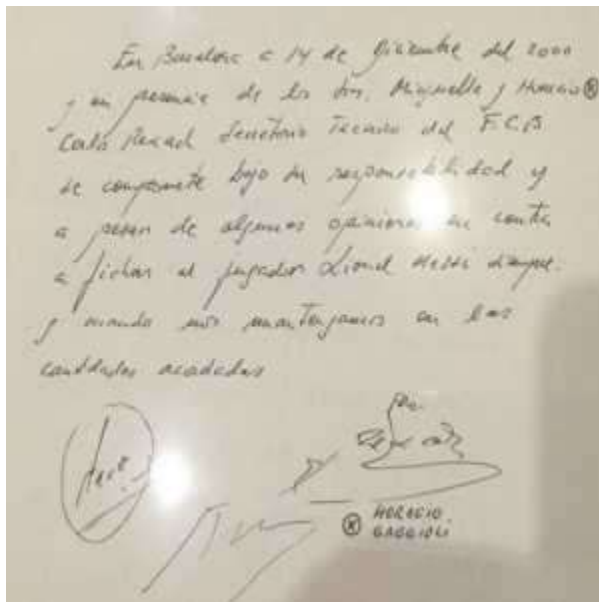


## 10 AMAZING FACTS ABOUT LIONEL MESSI



1. As a child, Messi suffered from growth hormone deficiency, which resulted in reduced growth as well as a number of other health complications for him. To combat his problem, he had to inject himself with human growth hormone by sticking a needle into his legs on a nightly basis for a period of three years.
2. Messi's first contract was written on a paper napkin. This happened because the 13 year old Messi impressed Barcelona's technical secretary at the time that he decided to sign him on the spot.



3. At one time while he was at Barcelona, Messi was offered the chance to play for the Spanish under-20 national team. However, he turned down the offer citing he was an Argentinean.
4. His debut for the Argentinean national team came when he was 18 in August of 2005 as a substitution. Unfortunately, his debut lasted less than a minute because he got into an incident and was sent off.



5. In 2010, Messi was appointed as a UNICEF Children's Ambassador. He has also donated to UNICEF \$812000 to the children's hospital in his hometown of Rosario and \$100000 for the purpose of helping children caught in the Syrian Civil War.
6. Messi's partner is Antonella Rocuzzo, who he has known since the age of 5 both because she was a friend of his family and because she was related to one of his best friends when he was growing up.



7. Messi has images of some of his family members tattooed on his body. For example, he has the face of his mother, Celia, tattooed on his left shoulder. Similarly, he has his son's name and handprints tattooed on his left calf.



8. His father has been representing him as his agent since he was a child at the age of 14, as shown by how his father was with him when he signed his first contract as well as the signing for his firstborn son, Thiago. His brother works managing his schedule as well as his other brother works with his charitable organization.



9. Messi broke a record in 2012 by scoring an amazing 86 goals in 66 games, in a single calendar year, thus beating the previous record, which was set in 1972 at 85 goals.

10. A Tokyo jeweler named Ginza Tanaka created a gold cast of Messi's left foot in honor of his 4<sup>th</sup> win of the Ballon d'Or, which stood at 10 inches tall, weighed 25 kilograms. The cast was worth \$5.25 million and it was sold for the sake of raising funds.

