



**POLICE
ATHLETIC
LEAGUE, INC.**

The best friend a kid can have

PAL News

Summer/Fall 2022

PAL: Emerging Strong From the Pandemic

As PAL's programs and organization has emerged from the COVID crisis, we have been getting stronger each day. During the last school year, we ran after-school programs at 30 sites for more than 5000 children across the five boroughs; in the late spring, we welcomed our new Executive Director, Carlos Velazquez; over the summer we ran the PLAYSTREETS program at seven locations and celebrated our partnership with NYPD in ways that have not been possible during the pandemic.

In this newsletter, we want to give you some more insight into how **PAL has stayed true to its mission**, working together with NYPD to support and inspire New York City's youth to realize their full potential. We continue to work with as many kids as we can to provide opportunities for them to improve their own and their communities' long-term well-being and the only way we can do this is with your support.

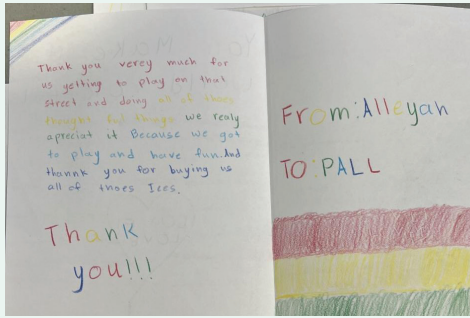
We hope you enjoy this look inside recent programming at the Police Athletic League and will consider making a gift by using the enclosed envelop or visiting PALNYC.org.

Summer Youthfest: Luna Park Coney Island

In conjunction with Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez's Office and NYPD Community Affairs Division, on Thursday, August 18, PAL hosted families with school-aged children for a fun afternoon at Luna Park, including groups of PAL Summer Camp participants from our Brooklyn Centers.



Members of NYPD helped man hot dog stands, supervised the lines and ensured safety at the rock-climbing wall. The FDNY were there, hosting a table of giveaways for the children. It was a beautiful sunny day, and everyone enjoyed the free food and carnival games. The afternoon was filled with fun as all participants received full access to Luna Park for 4 hours. To get each student off to a good start for the upcoming school year, everyone went home with a bookbag of school supplies.



PAL Summer Playstreets

Summer means getting outside! We were delighted this year to be back with PLAYSTREETS in full force, meaning thousands of youth in areas of high crime and poverty, across the five boroughs, had safe, supervised places to play together and have fun.

Wednesday, July 13 was the official opening ceremony for PAL's PLAYSTREETS program. This year Police Commissioner Sewell and PAL Executive Director, Carlos Velazquez were there to honor PAL's partnership with the NYPD by "Opening the Fire Hydrant", a tradition that kicks off the PAL and NYPD partnership to provide a safe summer for inner-city kids.

At our W 124th PLAYSTREETS location, we were delighted to partner with Harlem Village Academy (HVA). The school originally planned to utilize Marcus Garvey Park for recess however, the high rise in drug use in the park was making it impossible for the teachers to take the kids there. PAL worked with the principal and teachers to have the students come to our PLAYSTREETS program each day instead at coordinated times to minimize overcrowding and for the kids of HVA to have structured programming. We developed a great relationship with the students and staff. We all had such an amazing time and were thrilled to see that the kids made personalized Thank You cards for the PLAYSTREETS staff and Officers to show their appreciation.

PLAYSTREETS programs ran at seven locations serving 424 kids this summer. In addition to plenty of Arts & Crafts, Double-Dutch and Hula Hooping, the fire hydrants were opened by FDNY for everyone to cool off and have fun. FDNY officers were present to meet the kids and give them

personalized tours of the fire trucks. It was a unique opportunity for the kids to see and learn about the equipment the fire officers use. This year, local chess instructors introduced our participants to the game by volunteering their time for 2-3 sessions a week to play and teach chess. Local Police Officers gave their time to weekly scheduled games of Kickball, Basketball and 2 Hand Touch Football. The games help our ongoing efforts to bridge the gap between the community and our NYPD.

In addition to providing well-needed safe spaces, PLAYSTREETS provides employment opportunities for community residents and college students with full training given to them in Youth Development, Conflict Resolution and other skills.

There are many neighborhoods that could benefit from having a PAL PLAYSTREET open during the summer and we are excited to already be planning what's in store for 2023.

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Carlos Velazquez

A NOTE FROM PAL'S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CARLOS VELAZQUEZ



Dear Friends,

Since February, I have had the privilege and honor of working alongside PAL's dedicated staff and seeing first-hand the safe, nurturing environment PAL creates for so many of our city's young people. I am so pleased to have joined the organization as Executive Director and look forward to all we will achieve together in the coming years. Thank you for being active in your community through your support for and interest in PAL.

Growing up in New York City, I know firsthand the impact that organizations such as PAL can have on a community and in the life of a young person. I am proud to be here and grateful to be able to partner with you to provide free, quality programming to the next generation of leaders in our city. The recreational, educational, cultural, and social activities provided through our programs bring life-changing opportunities to our young people, essential support to families in our city, and a heightened sense of community to the neighborhoods we serve.

As you'll read in this newsletter, PAL reaches kids across the five boroughs year-round at no cost to our families, who have entrusted us with their most precious commodity—their children. As many New Yorkers struggle to emerge from the COVID crisis and deal with a harder economy, I want to make sure PAL journeys into 2023 as a strong and reliable partner, providing top-notch academic programs and social services for as many young people as possible.

If you are inspired by the report of this year's PLAYSTREETS program, know that we are already looking ahead to expand the PLAYSTREETS sites in summer 2023. It costs PAL \$30,000 to open a PLAYSTREETS site for the summer, for kids ages 8-18, Monday through Thursday, from 11am-4pm. This includes the cost for staff, permits, insurance and food for participants. Many of the sites we serve do not have local parks and the PLAYSTREETS are sometimes the only place for these kids to safely play outside. This is the case at 196th in the South Bronx. PAL has run PLAYSTREETS at this site for 30 years in collaboration with the DOE, Fordham Bedford Community Services Organization and Our Lady of Refuge Church.

Each summer PLAYSTREETS allows youth to interact with NYPD officers fostering positive interactions within communities where trust is often an issue. The supervised activities lower the risk of children committing or being victims of crime, gang involvement, teen pregnancy and substance abuse. They provide a broad range of options for kids to constructively be together and get the recommended 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day.

To keep sites like 196th street open next summer and bring this programming to as many kids as possible, please consider making a gift to PAL online at www.palnyc.org/donate or by using the donation form enclosed with this newsletter.

Thanks so much for your consideration and for continuing to partner with PAL to create opportunities for the youth in our city's most underserved neighborhoods.

CARLOS VELAZQUEZ

Executive Director, PAL



HEALTHY FOOD AND FUN



“I did feel kinda nervous teaching but once I got comfortable, I started to enjoy it. The kids were always excited for the lessons and always came up to me asking what are they learning next. I thought they weren’t going to like it but it turned out they did. They come up to me showing me the Nutrition Facts labels and that makes me think, “Wow, I inspired these kids”.”

-Henry, CHAT at PAL Harlem Center

This summer our Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) Teens, Chance Santiago, Melody Pagan, and Henry Gallegos partnered with interns from Hunter College and Cornell University, in both the Choose Health Action Teens program (CHAT) and the Choose Health: Food, Fun, and Fitness (CHFFF).

CHFFF is a comprehensive nutrition and fitness curriculum composed of six hands-on lessons for 3rd-8th graders. CHAT combines youth civic engagement with efforts to encourage healthy lifestyles by coaching the teens to teach healthy eating and active living, via the CHFFF curriculum, to the younger youth. The Teen educators are provided with a structured 12-hour training, as well as support and mentorship throughout the program, building valuable experience and skills as they chart their course beyond High School.

Chance, Melody and Henry taught two 90-minute lessons a week, over three weeks, at two PAL centers: Harlem Center and Polo Grounds. The lessons included active games and a recipe to create and taste.

This was our 3rd year with the program and each year it proves to be an engaging and educational opportunity for our teens and our 8-15-year-old members. As well as giving them the tools and encouragement to lead physically and emotionally healthy lifestyles, the program gives the kids plenty of opportunity to exercise their social skills with an emphasis on teamwork and sportsmanship throughout the curriculum.

PAL is grateful to Dr. Wendy Wolfe and Dr. Sally Jo Crosiar, the curriculum creators, and to Hunter College and Cornell University for their ongoing partnership which makes this program possible.

SYEP SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Chance, Melody and Henry’s experience was just a small part of the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) which this year provided 1,100 New York City 14-24 year olds with six weeks of summer employment and educational experiences. This important PAL program focusses on both building youth-development workplace skills and providing the participants with a summer income.

Many of the opportunities are a result of PAL’s partnership with community-based organizations and government agencies including NYPD, New York Junior Tennis & Learning, Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, and Department of Veterans’ Services. Some examples of roles include assisting with clerical duties in local hospitals and libraries; serving lunches at a senior center; helping children at day care centers; and helping with clean up at local parks. In addition, many

well-known businesses participate and this past summer that included Walgreens, 16 Handles, Staples, and Allstate Insurance. This PAL program helps participants gain the self-confidence, career awareness, financial literacy, and interpersonal competencies needed to succeed over the long term. These are skills you can’t learn in a classroom but are vital in assisting young people in making a successful transition to healthy adulthood and economic independence.

For some of our older youth, the placement also helps them visualize a career path and has led to longer-term employment with the partner once the summer is over. Some of the kids have had several summers of experiencing SYEP and it’s terrific to see those kids who attended for the final time this year reflect on how far they have come since they started their first placement.



POLICE COMMISSIONER FOR A DAY CONTEST 2022

This year PAL partnered with the NYPD on the 76th annual "Police Commissioner for a Day" essay contest. Open to high school students throughout NYC, they were invited to submit an essay responding to the prompt: How would you, as Police Commissioner for a Day, seek to decrease hate crimes against marginalized populations (groups who are excluded based on gender identity, race, physical ability, sexual orientation, immigration status, etc.) in the city?

This year's Police Commissioner for a Day winner was 16-year-old Gabriel Brown from Tottenville High School in Staten Island. He proposed the inventive weekly program "NYC is a team" which would be focused on team-building exercises to help diverse and varied members of the community better understand and build relationships with each other. He stressed the importance of providing a fun, stress-free and safe environment, where neighbors can get to know and understand one another.

Building on that theme, Gabriel also suggested Share Your Story, a program to facilitate "diverse members of our community to share the struggles they have faced during their life...By realizing how people who might have originally seemed so different have so much in common and face every

day human problems, attendees of this program will build empathy towards each other and form a common thread."

On June 6, a ceremony was held at 1 Police Plaza, for Gabriel and 42 other competition awardees who came from all five boroughs of the city. They were officially sworn in by Chief of Personnel Martin Morales and during the day, they got to spend time with their NYPD counterparts to learn about their role and responsibilities as a member of NYPD. The ceremony was led by NYPD Commissioner Keechant Sewell who picked the winning essay. She stressed that "the voices of our youth provide a unique viewpoint". We were all inspired to hear Gabriel read his essay and present his ideas and are so grateful to all the students who submitted essays this year.

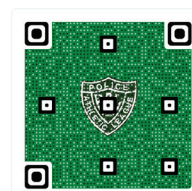
Gabriel said he was inspired to enter the competition by "the opportunity to speak my mind, combat ignorance and encourage people to learn more about the community they live in."

When you support PAL, you are helping to make these interactions happen. We appreciate your support for the Police Athletic League.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO SUPPORT THE POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE

- **ANNUAL GIFT:** A gift of any amount helps PAL youth and programs in NYC. You can use the enclosed envelope or visit PALNYC.org.
- **MONTHLY GIVING:** Consider making a recurring gift to PAL each month! You will be a member of the 1914 Club, exclusive for our monthly donors. Visit PALNYC.org or use the enclosed envelope.
- **MATCHING GIFTS:** Does your company match gifts? If so, this can double your gift to PAL!
- **DONOR ADVISED FUNDS:** Recommend a donor-advised fund grant to PAL through your DAF giving account online or by contacting your fund manager. Our Federal Tax ID Number is: 13-5596811
- **STOCK OR WIRE TRANSFER:** A gift of stock or a wire transfer is a simple way to support PAL. For more information, please contact the Advancement team at advancement@palnyc.org.

DONATE ONLINE
WWW.PALNYC.ORG



PAL'S FIRST HIGH SCHOOL FAIR

On Wednesday, October 12 from 5pm – 6:30pm, PAL held its first High School Fair at our Harlem Center. It was attended by PAL students from our programs at Harlem Center and our Polo Grounds site, as well as other local families from PS/IS 180 Hugo Newman on nearby West 127th Street.

The students were able to meet with school admissions staff and current pupils and find out more about the variety of options available for High School education. Representatives attended from local public high schools, independent

private schools, public charter, and parochial high schools.

We were joined by The New York Public Library who had staff there to sign families up for library cards, and fellow non-profit Student Sponsor Partners was on hand to speak with families about options to make private education affordable and accessible. We were delighted to host more than 60 students and hope this is the first of more PAL High School fairs as we continue to advance opportunities for our youth across centers and the wider community.



BLUE CHIPS SPORTS

On October 22, PAL kicked off the next phase of its collaboration with Blue Chips, a year-round citywide NYPD mentoring and athletics program, by launching a NY Jets-backed flag-football league that's running across all five boroughs.

The NY Jets are providing uniforms, flags and field markers for 64 teams across eight local borough brackets in which 650 12-18 year olds will play alongside and be coached by more than 135 participating NYPD officers. There's an inter-bracket tournament and then the champion teams will play each other in a citywide playoff.

Most of the games will take place on Saturday mornings in city parks across the five boroughs and at the Queens Police Academy facility. At the end of the season the top teams will get to travel to and play at the NY Jets practice facility in New Jersey where they will be joined by some of the Jets players.

On October 22 there was a city-wide workout and all the kids and cops got to practice together under PAL rules and meet their team members. We're pleased to extend the PAL/Blue Chips partnership and thank the New York Jets and Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice for their support, which makes this program possible.

