



PALNews

Fall 2016



More than 100 years ago, PAL began in New York City thanks to then Police Commissioner Arthur Woods and then Captain John Sweeney who wanted kids to be kids and not be threatened with arrests for playing on the streets. In the summer of 1914, 29 streets in New York City were cordoned off and police officers volunteered to organize recreational activities, launching the very first PAL PLAYSTREETS, and in essence a dynamic institution for youth in New York City.

In the decades since, donors like you have lent critical support to ensure that young people have dedicated outdoor spaces for play during summer. As the socio-economic landscape of New York City changes, why is PAL PLAYSTREETS still a vital program as it was when the "asphalt camps" began 100 years ago?

WE ASKED MELISSA MARRERO.

Melissa grew up in Red Hook in Brooklyn in the nineties – when *Life* magazine described it as one of the "worst" neighborhoods in the United States and as "the crack capital of America." Melissa, who is in her 30s, still remembers the day her school principal – a beloved role model – was shot dead in a crossfire among drug dealers, a tragedy that reduced students and staff to panic and despair.

Melissa found a lifeline in PAL PLAYSTREETS – which are organized in some of the most vulnerable and at-risk neighborhoods of New York City. During those summer months, instead of getting schooled in drug dealing, Melissa found comfort among supportive PAL staff, played sports with positive peers and felt safe as NYPD officers patrolled around PAL PLAYSTREETS. In Red Hook, PAL PLAYSTREETS was a doorstep to hope.

Today, Red Hook has changed. And Melissa is transformed. Thanks to the support of her mentors and positive influencers at PAL PLAYSTREETS, Melissa made education a priority to escape the vicious cycle of poverty and violence. Today, Melissa is a public school Dean and a proud role model to her son and her students.

Why is PAL PLAYSTREETS still a vital program? PAL alumni Melissa responds, "PAL is as important today as it was when I was young. Thank you for being our pal. You saved my life - our lives."

Thank you for your support to PAL PLAYSTREETS – you give hope to kids when they need it the most. ●

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YOU MAKE EVERY SEASON AT PAL AN EXCITING ONE!

Dear PAL Supporter,

With your ongoing support, PAL provided an amazing summer to thousands of New York City's youth through the PAL PLAYSTREETS and Summer Camp programs. It is hard to believe, but we are now halfway through the first semester of PAL's free after-school program. Dana Wheeler, our new Director of Education and Program Development (see profile on page 3) and her team put together a curriculum that focuses on social-emotional learning and extended school-day learning through fun, hands-on activities. The work in our 24 Centers is central to our ability to be a resource for inner-city kids. This year we have 5,300 elementary and middle-school kids in the after-school program and 2,000 youth involved in our teen centers.

Under the direction of Danielle Madden-Buck, our Sports and Recreation Director, PAL's signature program-PAL Cops & Kids-has already held 500 sports tournaments bringing together police officers with kids in their precincts. We estimate that this year we will work with 30 additional precincts and more than 450 police officers. PAL sports leagues are not the only place where officers are engaged with our kids. Cops can often be found dropping by Centers to help with homework and mentor PAL kids.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the 44th annual Superstar Gala. This premiere dinner is our largest fundraising event and this year it raised more than \$1.2 million to support PAL's mission. We owe special thanks to all the attendees, sponsors, and the honorees Robert J. McGuire, former NYPD Commissioner, and John Osborn, CEO of BBDO New York. Everything we do is possible because of the support received from public and private sources. We are especially thankful to all the individual donors who support PAL. You make PAL possible for the kids of our great City and for that we are thankful.

Lastly, I hope you enjoy receiving my monthly email update – "From the desk of..." If you don't receive this update, you can sign up at our website www.palnyc.org.

Sincerely,



Frederick J. Watts
Executive Director



YOU BROUGHT EDUCATION TO PAL – MEET DANA WHEELER

Education is a major resource we provide to kids and youth. We asked new Director of Education and Program Development, Dana Wheeler, what PAL students and staff have to look forward to for this school year. Ms. Wheeler was previously one of PAL's Education Specialists and steps into her new role with over 6 years of experience in New York City's independent school network and a background education in childhood education. She brings a fresh outlook on teaching and inspiring students and staff alike.

Q: With your new role as Director of Education and Program Development, what do you hope to pass on to our students?

A: I became a teacher in order to have a positive impact on young people. My role has changed this year, but I still describe myself as an educator. I teach the kids by teaching the adults who help them develop and grow. Education is freedom, so I hope I can pass on the importance of learning and how the process will open up their minds and their world.

Q: Can you give us some details on PAL's approach to education?

A: We use a project-based learning approach to education. Usually, we select a theme with input from our participants. The common core learning standards and best teaching practices are also integrated into our units. For example, after a year of researching and designing hands on STEM experiments, our students are able to showcase the culmination of their work at our annual PAL Science Fair.

Q: What is the overall aim of the Education Department?

A: Actually, we have a few but our main focus is to offer support to all educators at PAL and develop programming that is fun and age appropriate, with having enough rigor to affect day-school grades and attitudes toward learning.

PAL COPS & KIDS – INSPIRING HOPE



One of PAL's well-regarded programs is PAL Cops & Kids sports - where police officers and youth play as teammates in sports leagues, building trust and cooperation, and breaking down barriers of suspicion and stereotypes. NYPD officers coach and play along with teens in Cops & Kids sports such as basketball, baseball, flag football and volleyball. Last year, more than 400 cops played side by side with 600 young people—inspiring hope, change and understanding. One such example is PAL kid William, now 19 years old. William dropped out of college after his first semester. He joined PAL's Cops & Kids program last year in the Bronx and proved himself as LeBron James in the making. He was voted MVP at this year's PAL

Bronx Cops & Kids championship game and was a three-point champion at the PAL All-Star basketball game. But PAL Cops & Kids did more than highlight William's basketball prowess. Playing alongside police officers who mentored him, William was not only inspired to improve his game but it also encouraged him to become an officer himself. William's dream to join the NYPD has motivated him to go back to college. To keep this positive momentum going, the PAL staff hired him as a sports specialist for PAL PLAYSTREETS this summer. William is a classic PAL kid – our young people may take a wrong turn in life but they have a pal in PAL to help course correct. Thank you for your part in our youths' journey. ●



YOUR SUPPORT FOR PAL HAS CHANGED THE LIFE OF THOUSANDS OF KIDS.

Thanks to you, New York City's most vulnerable kids were exposed to a summer that brought them, fun, learning and positive bonds that will last a lifetime. Now excitement is in the air at all our PAL centers because of your support for PAL Afterschool. We're thrilled to share with you all the accomplishments PAL kids have made this summer and so far this fall. We are so grateful of your commitment to PAL and want you to know how important you are. Enjoy your October newsletter, you are truly a kid's best friend.

PAL VOLUNTEERS MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE – MEET ONE.



Centerstage: PAL Volunteer of Inspiration, Ashley Koprowski with PAL MS 118 GirlTalk participants

ASHLEY KOPROWSKI

Volunteers are a huge part of the work we do with our students here at PAL. In April, the nation celebrated Volunteer Appreciation Week and PAL would like to highlight one of the many dynamic volunteers who support its mission. For the last two years, Ashley Koprowski has served at PAL for our micro-mentoring leadership development program, GirlTalk.

Ashley is a Social Worker by trade and loves to be an example to our students. Whether facilitating talks in education and leadership; or while attending the annual program retreat, she finds her time to be a wonderful experience. We here at PAL are grateful to the many dedicated volunteers like Ashley that help us make a positive lasting impact in the communities we serve. Thank you. ●

A SPECIAL YEAR FOR PAL EVENTS

Four premiere fundraisers, twelve Business Luncheons, a 5K Walk/Run and a Holiday Party will benefit 35,000 kids this year and stabilize the financial health of the organization. PAL's 18th Legal Profession Luncheon honored, The Honorable Barbara S. Jones and Andrew J. Levander on April 11, raising our goal of \$600,000. The 44th Annual Superstar Dinner, honoring Robert J. McGuire and John B. Osborn, exceeded its goal with income totaling \$1,249,000. On October 18, we paid tribute to 35,000 PAL Kids with Host Tony Danza at our 11th Real Estate & Construction Luncheon. We close out the year with our 28th Women of the Year Luncheon on December 8, honoring Carmen Anderson, Ami Kaplan and Ellen Zimiles, and hosted by Judge Jeanine Pirro.

These signature events are enhanced by PAL's monthly Business Luncheons, hosted by John A. Catsimatidis, Robert M. Morgenthau and Mark Simone. Seven events have to date raised \$194,000 with guest speakers Daniel A. Nigro, Gerard Baker, Sen. Bob Kerrey, Alan Dershowitz, Congressman Peter T. King, Sen. Charles E. Schumer and Commissioner William J. Bratton. On the calendar, Tony Danza will be the guest speaker on November 1, followed by NYPD Commissioner James P. O'Neill on November 9.

We are also holding our second annual 5K Walk/Run on November 13 and our annual Holiday Party on December 10. Information on all these events is on our website or call PAL's Development Department at 212-477-9450 ext 307 or 309.

Please join us in making a difference in the lives of New York's children.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOVEMBER 29TH IS COMING SOON

November 29th is #GivingTuesday and it is not just a global day of giving but also a day for you, our most loyal friends, to spread the word about a mission that you make possible. We hope that you will show your PAL Pride and use #GivingTuesday as a day to give and share on social media for the cause that is dear to your heart!

We hope that we can count on you! Show your support with #GivingPALPride on Nov. 29th.