



**THE PLAY EQUITY FUND EXPANDS #STAYACTIVESTAYSTRONG PROGRAM
WITH LOS ANGELES ARCHDIOCESE MEAL CENTERS TO REACH MORE FAMILIES**

Play Equipment distributions with Catholic Schools launches May 28 at St. Lawrence Brindisi

LOS ANGELES (May 27, 2020) – The Play Equity Fund has expanded the #StayActiveStayStrong program and free play equipment distributions by partnering with the Archdiocese of Los Angeles to reach more kids and families. This program encourages healthful activities for local youth while they are confined at home due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The first donation of equipment will be at St. Lawrence of Brindisi Catholic School in Watts on Thursday, May 28, from 9am to 11am, located at 10044 Compton Ave., Los Angeles 90002. This location typically serves 1,000 meals daily. There will also be equipment giveaways at six other area Catholic schools on Thursday, with volunteers facilitating the distributions. Many children and families don't have access to play equipment, or the support to stay active at home. In addition to the physical benefits activity brings, movement can help alleviate the stress and anxiety that can accompany home confinement. All are welcome to pick up equipment, and if any remains, the disbursements will continue on May 29.

“As kids and their families in our local communities’ struggle with home confinement – and with schools and most outlets for activity closed – we have worked with our partners on this initiative to build and support young people being active,” said **Renata Simril**, President & CEO of the Play Equity Fund. “Play is good for everyone’s physical and mental health. The Los Angeles Archdiocese is a valued partner for the Play Equity Fund, to reach more youth and help us strengthen those who need it most during this time of crisis.”

Since April – in collaboration with Nike, Kole Imports, Dick’s Sporting Goods, WSS and Score Sports – the Play Equity Fund and LA84 Foundation have been providing LAUSD families and students with thousands of free balls, racquet sets, jump ropes and other gear children can use to play at home. The equipment distributions across several LAUSD Grab & Go Food Centers continue until the end of the school year.

The program is now growing significantly to include the meal centers of the Los Angeles Archdiocese.

“We are tremendously grateful to the Play Equity Fund for their generous contribution of sports equipment for our most needy students in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles,” said **Paul Escala**, Senior Director and Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. “The over 7,500 pieces of donated equipment will ensure students to continue their physical learning at-home and recognizes that sports and play is a critical component to the advancement of youth development.”

In addition to St. Lawrence of Brindisi, the other six Catholic Schools that serve meals and will be distributing free play equipment on Thursday include Our Lady of Guadalupe School, St. Patrick School, Santa Isabel School, San Miguel School, St. Frances X. Cabrini School and St. Gertrude School.

This equipment has been purchased through the Play Equity Fund, including support for this project specifically from the Carrie Estelle Doheny Foundation, the John H. And Cynthia Lee Smet Foundation, and the Specialty Family Foundation.

The Play Equity Fund and the LA84 Foundation continue to explore opportunities with distribution partners throughout the region to help more children and families during this difficult time.

To accompany the play equipment, the #StayActiveStayStrong program includes instructional videos featuring Olympic athletes, pro athletes and other sports figures to guide and encourage all students and families. The videos are being shared on the Play Equity Fund and LA84 Foundation social platforms, and on PlayEquityFund.org.

This series helps kids connect with the fun of sports and promotes playing at home. Among others, the videos include the Los Angeles Rams' **Aaron Donald**, the LA Galaxy's **David Bingham**, the Los Angeles Dodgers' **Kike Hernandez**, the Los Angeles Chargers' **Austin Ekeler**, former Los Angeles Lakers' player **Michael Cooper**, UCLA All-American gymnast **Katelyn Ohashi**, as well as Olympians **Kyla Ross**, **Angela Ruggiero**, **Molly Schaus** and **Jordyn Wieber**. There is a fun #PlayEquityChallenge on social media that encourages kids to join the exercises that each of the athletes introduce in their videos.

-#PLAYEQUITY-

ABOUT THE PLAY EQUITY FUND

A 501(c)3 public charity, the Play Equity Fund was established in 2014 to expand the work and impact of the private 501(c)3 LA84 Foundation. The Play Equity Fund focuses specifically on bringing the transformational power of sport and structured play to all children, regardless of their zip code and socioeconomic status. To learn more about the Play Equity Fund, visit www.PlayEquityFund.org and follow @PlayEquityFund on Twitter and Instagram.