



## THE PLAY EQUITY FUND ADDS JAMES LOPEZ AS PROGRAM DIRECTOR

*Experienced Strategist to Drive Social Impact Initiatives Across Diverse Communities*

**LOS ANGELES (Aug. 5, 2021)** – The Play Equity Fund is pleased to announce the recent hiring of **James Lopez** as Program Director, Social Impact. James has started in his vital role working with leaders, partners and youth organizations as he helps amplify their collective work to raise awareness, build stronger connections and move audiences to action.

James manages strategic sports-based youth development projects that will create meaningful social change for communities, yield important data and produce the stories that inform advocacy strategies for the Play Equity Movement. By using a social work lens and his diverse background in sports, James brings a unique perspective to the Play Equity Movement and he is passionate about propelling the organization forward to close the Play Equity gap.

“The experience and understanding that James brings not only makes the staff and efforts of the Play Equity Fund stronger, but he is a resource to the communities and youth that we work to serve,” said **Renata Simril, President of the Play Equity Fund**. “James has strong connections to organizations and leaders, and he understands the critical role sports can play in helping develop positive futures for young people. We’re fortunate to have him join our team.”



James served as Manager of Strategy and Impact at the Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation (LADF), the official charity of the Los Angeles Dodgers, from 2015-2021.

At LADF, James worked to develop a robust program measurement and evaluation strategy for all programs and fundraising efforts, as well as contributing to research and fund development of the organization.

James earned his Bachelor of Arts in Sociology in 2009, with a minor in Education from the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB). After serving as a Recreation Supervisor for UCSB’s intramural and club sports department for two years, he spent all of 2011 living in Shaoxing, China.

While in China, James served as an English teacher for one year before returning to Southern California in 2012. Before beginning his graduate studies in 2014, James worked as a recreation/sports coordinator for a residential treatment facility for young men in the foster care system. In that role, he implemented new recreational programming which included inter-facility sports leagues, music lessons, and fitness

programs. During this time, he developed a passion for social work, and sports-based youth development.

James earned his Master of Social Work in spring of 2016 at the University of Southern California with a concentration on Community Organizing, Planning & Administration. His first full-time season at LADF came in June 2016, after serving at the organization as a graduate intern.

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### **About the Play Equity Fund**

A 501(c)3 public charity, the Play Equity Fund was established by the LA84 Foundation in 2014 as its charitable partner and supports programs and actions to ensure all children have equal access to the transformative power of sport and structured play. The Play Equity Fund supports the sports-based youth development ecosystem for greater impact, raises awareness of inequities and develops partnerships to advocate for funding and sustainable solutions to ensure children in communities of color have access to pathways for lifelong well-being. The Play Equity Fund is the only nonprofit focused solely on Play Equity as a social justice issue. To learn more, visit [PlayEquityFund.org](http://PlayEquityFund.org), or @PlayEquityFund on Twitter and Instagram.