



THE LA84 FOUNDATION & THE PLAY EQUITY FUND TO HOST A CONFERENCE OF EXPERTS ON THE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

California First Partner Joining Thought Leaders To Discuss The Value of Sports, Play & Movement In Addressing Mental Health

LOS ANGELES (April 28, 2023) – The LA84 Foundation and the Play Equity Fund are co-hosting the “*Movement Matters: Tackling the Youth Mental Health Crisis*” convening with the Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness and Mental Well-Being on Wednesday, May 10 at the LA84 campus. Panelists will discuss how sport, play and movement can provide youth with greater mental wellness, how being active promotes healing, and how it can build resiliency.

The event is from 9am-1:30pm on May 10, and it will be held with support of Kaiser Permanente in recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month at the LA84 Foundation, 2141 W. Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, 90018.

Speakers will include California First Partner **Jennifer Siebel Newsom**, who serves as the Co-Chair of the Governor’s Advisory Council on Physical Fitness and Mental Well-Being, as well as **Megan Bartlett**, Founder of the Center for Healing and Justice Through Sport, and **Julie Miller-Phipps**, President, Southern California and Hawaii Markets, Kaiser Permanente.

LA84 Foundation President & CEO **Renata Simril**, who is a member of the Governor’s Advisory Council on Physical Fitness and Mental Well-Being and also a board member of several national youth advocacy organizations, will serve as moderator of a panel discussion on the benefits of sports and play to the mental well-being of young people.

“Children are in the midst of an ongoing mental health crisis,” said Simril. “Expanding the connection between physical and emotional health, and providing youth with more opportunities to engage with their peers has never been more important for kids’ mental health. Exploring how we can increase our support for the mental health and wellness of young people will be the focus of this important conversation.”

The panel will discuss the challenges facing young people in our communities, as well as examine solutions. The panel will include Bartlett, **Dr. Byron Young**, Child And Adolescent Psychiatrist at the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, **Violeta Ruiz**, Principal of the Santee Educational Complex, as well as local youth, who will give perspectives on the mental health challenges currently facing students. The event will also include two breakout sessions, with interactive components.

The first breakout will feature the connection between sport, healing and wellness presented by the Center for Healing and Justice Through Sport. Through her work with the Center for Healing and Justice Through Sport, Bartlett provides support to organizations to ensure that all sports experiences are healing experiences.

The second breakout session will show new innovations within schools by Our Own, an LA-based nonprofit focused on developing mentally fit students through meditation, yoga, and nutrition, and changing how schools perceive and participate in health and wellness activities.

The Governor's Advisory Council on Physical Fitness and Mental Well-Being is promoting its "Move Your Body, Calm Your Mind" campaign to support the physical fitness and mental well-being of all Californians at all ages.

"Mental health and physical health are intrinsically linked and critical for our children's well-being," said First Partner **Jennifer Siebel Newsom**. "As parents, the Governor and I know personally the importance of starting early with healthy habits to set our kids up to live the best lives possible. It's why the Governor has invested \$4.7 billion in universal access to mental health supports for all children and youth and why the work we're doing on the Governor's Advisory Council on Physical Fitness and Mental Well-Being is so critical. Because so many young children are hurting, we're working together on strategies to encourage them to disconnect from their devices and engage in regular movement and mindfulness practices."

Kaiser Permanente exists to provide high-quality, affordable health care services and to improve the health of its members and the communities it serves.

"It has been proven time and again physical fitness not only helps prevent chronic diseases in youths, but it also improves their mood and better equips them to handle stress. We are proud to be a part of this important conversation that both reduces the stigma of mental illness while promoting the overall total health of children and young adults," said **Julie Miller-Phipps**, president of Kaiser Permanente Southern California and Hawaii Health Plan and Hospitals.

Among many factors, the social isolation and academic disruptions associated with the pandemic have led to greater mental health challenges for kids. These leaders and their organizations are committed to facing the challenges of anxiety and depression young people are experiencing and reversing these trends by focusing on the healing power of sport, play and movement.

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About the LA84 Foundation

The LA84 Foundation is a national leader in support of youth sport and education about the role of sports in positive youth development. As a legacy of the 1984 Summer Olympics, the LA84 Foundation has supported thousands of youth-serving organizations in Southern California through grant making, funding facilities and fields of play, training coaches and commissioning research. The LA84 Foundation takes on critical issues as a national thought leader by elevating youth sports and play as an integral to lifelong well-being. To learn more, visit www.la84.org and @LA84Foundation on Twitter and Instagram.

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 play. The Play Equity Fund supports the sports-based youth development ecosystem to remove barriers for greater impact, raises awareness of inequities and develops partnerships to ensure children have access to pathways for lifelong well-being. The Play Equity Fund is the only nonprofit focused on play equity as a social justice issue. To learn more, visit www.playequityfund.org and @playequityfund on Twitter and Instagram.