



NIKE AND THE PLAY EQUITY FUND CELEBRATE THE OPENING YEAR OF THE MADE TO PLAY LA INITIATIVE IN BOYLE HEIGHTS & WATTS AND RELEASE INNOVATIVE PARENT ENGAGEMENT REPORT

LOS ANGELES (June 8, 2023) – Nike and the Play Equity Fund joined together today with 13 grassroots youth sport and play organizations from Boyle Heights and Watts to celebrate a year of the Made to Play LA partnership that is focused on closing the play equity gap for girls in these neighborhoods. The event, hosted by Proyecto Pastoral and held at Aliso Pico Recreation Center, also celebrated the release of a groundbreaking published report of learnings from the partnership that will serve as a guide for sports-based youth development organizations across the nation.

Over the previous year, the Nike and Play Equity Fund Made to Play LA initiative has reached over 1,000 girls, 130 coaches and awarded \$770,000 in grants to the 13 organizations in Boyle Heights and Watts to encourage girls' involvement in sports and play.

The event included all Made to Play LA partners, coaches, community partners and stakeholders from Boyle Heights and Watts. Over the last year, the 13 organizations, the Play Equity Fund and Nike have developed a community of practice that among other facets includes four working groups, a women-led Community Leadership Group and an online research hub to support their efforts.

The release of the report – *Best Practices in Recruitment and Retention for Girls in Sports: The Critical Role of Parent Engagement* – strengthens Made to Play LA's collective work over the last 12 months and the data exchange, and has the potential to enhance the efforts of sports-based youth development organizations nationally. The report focuses on the critical role parents and caregivers have in improving girls' experiences in sports. Research previously has not concentrated on parent engagement for the recruitment, participation and retention of girls of color in sports.

Produced by Claremont Evaluation Center – with community insights from Boyle Heights and Watts Made To Play partners – the report offers program and parent engagement strategies aimed at increasing access to sport and play for girls of color in historically marginalized communities.

“We believe sport and play are critical to the mental and physical health of our kids,” said **Renata Simril**, President of the Play Equity Fund. “We realize it can also demand increased advocacy for young women to recognize the benefits of sports participation in their busy lives. The accomplishments of Made to Play LA through parent engagement and coach strategies demonstrates what we can achieve through collaboration. I am grateful to Nike for their commitment, and the work of the local organizations toward our vision to support all communities to be healthier through play equity.”

The three-year, \$1.3 million Made to Play LA program launched in 2022 to empower Black girls and Latinas in Boyle Heights and Watts, after insights by the Play Equity Fund in 2021 not only clearly confirmed the lifelong value of sport and play, but also found that household income is the greatest indicator of whether youth participate. Boyle Heights and Watts were among the two lowest-income neighborhoods in LA County with household incomes of nearly \$40K and \$30K, respectively, at the time of this research.

For girls in LA, the frequency they played continued to steadily decline, and these numbers decreased as girls age – and drop dramatically for young women in low-income neighborhoods. The 13 organizations have been co-invested in this initiative to help grow their programs, nurture the health of the girls that participate – as well as inspire stronger communities in the wake of the pandemic.

NIKE QUOTE

Today's host, Proyecto Pastoral, works to instill confidence and self-efficacy in girls through their sports programming in Boyle Heights so they graduate and are motivated to give back to their community.

The report offers over 20 research-backed program strategies and more than 50 parent engagement actions for coaches and leaders to put into practice to reach and retain more girls in sport programs.

Throughout the remainder of the Made To Play LA initiative, the Play Equity Fund and Nike will support the 13 organizations as they aim to implement input from the report into their programs. The partnership with the Play Equity Fund and community nonprofit organizations is a continuation of Nike's Made To Play global commitment to get kids moving, while working with local partners to increase kids' participation in sport – particularly in marginalized communities.

To learn more about the Made to Play partnership, please visit: <https://playequityfund.org/nike-la/>.

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 to remove barriers to the transformative power of sport and 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 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.

About Nike Social & Community Impact

We believe in the transformative power of sport to help move the world forward and create change. To help create a more equitable and inclusive world, we're tackling systemic inequality through our commitment to getting kids active and building inclusive communities. We're empowering adults to welcome all kids to play through community partnerships and coaching resources. And we're teaming up with organizations and our employees around the world – to rewrite the playbook so everyone can win in life. We invite you to learn more about our Social & Community Impact as part of [Nike's Purpose](#).

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