

Sports Organizations Join Forces to Create "Racial Equity Assessment & Learning" Tool For US Youth Sports Providers

Tool & contributing research supported by Beyond Sport, the Play Equity Fund, thinkBeyond, DICK'S Sporting Goods Foundation & sport and racial equity experts

NEW YORK, NY, USA, September 27, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With increasing momentum in the world of sport to address racial inequities on and off the field, a collective of sport for social change leaders, youth-focused community sport providers and experts in sport and subjects related to race have created a resource to help the community sport sector identify potential gaps affecting racial equity work at the organizational and structural levels. The free online [Racial Equity Assessment & Learning Tool \(REAL\)](#) allows users to self-assess their internal systems and practices and provides steps they can take to improve their ability to address structural racism.

The creation of [REAL](#) was inspired by a nationwide survey of youth sports providers led by sport for social impact nonprofits Beyond Sport and the Play Equity Fund to better understand how sports are utilized to address issues around racism. The survey and mapping results totaled 18 projects in 21 cities based on 16 qualitative and quantitative questions.

These findings were recently released in the report, "[Mapping Sports' Role In Reducing Inequality In the U.S.](#)", which explores the unique role that sports have in engaging youngsters in building a common ground between those from different backgrounds and the efforts of these programs in helping address racial inequality. It also includes several case studies of youth sports programs from across the country.

"The Play Equity Fund supports meaningful work that advances the essential role that youth sports can have in fighting racism," said Renata Simril, President of the Play Equity Fund. "This survey helps show the grassroots efforts that youth sports programs have in creating connections between young people from different backgrounds while positively impacting kids across the nation. The online tool can quickly provide guidance to help leaders of youth sports organizations. We're proud to partner in this work."

The mapping and tool creation were prompted by the ongoing work of winners of Beyond Sport's 2020 Sport for Reduced Racial Inequalities Collective Impact Award supported by The DICK'S Sporting Goods Foundation and an expert advisory panel. Those organizations honored include America SCORES New York, the Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation, Memphis Inner City

Rugby and PeacePlayers US.

The results of the study, which led to the creation of REAL, reflected that community organizations weren't necessarily addressing the systemic aspects of racial inequality. The majority of respondents focused on providing opportunities and developing skills for social mobility for those impacted by racism and racial inequality. This led to addressing racial inequality as an indirect outcome due to a focus on addressing the symptoms – discrimination – rather than the root causes of systemic and institutional racism.

The survey indicated there was an urgent need to help youth programs increase their capacity to evaluate the impact of their work, as well as assess how they measure success in reducing racial inequality. Beyond Sport, in continued partnership with The DICK'S Sporting Goods Foundation, stepped up to the opportunity to assist youth organizations and help strategically advance the sector as a whole with an online tool available to all and with guidelines and curriculums to help combat racism at the grassroots level.

"The development of REAL is grounded in research and collaboration, developed by a range of national experts seeking to directly impact systemic and institutional racism," said Fred Turner, Executive Director of Beyond Sport. "The tool is designed to galvanize action, while giving organizations guidance as they look at what they need to do to walk the talk when it comes to racial equity in their organizations. It's past time to get real about the issues we face, and that starts with getting our own houses in order."

REAL encompasses 11 questions, with each query having four possible answers that will reflect how each organization currently performs in each corresponding area. Upon completion, each organization will receive a free report, tailored to their organization and the work they do daily, with a score and input on how to improve their program. The assessment takes five minutes and can be re-taken as often as needed to track progress. It can be used equally by organizations working directly with a small number of participants, as by those working with thousands of youth in a more preventative and educational context.

The Expert Advisory Panel includes: Kenneth Shropshire (Global Sport Institute at Arizona State University), Renata Simril (LA84 Foundation), Beverly Smith & Debbie Morant (LISC), Kely Nascimento-DeLuca (The Nascimento Foundation), James Lopez (Play Equity Fund), Kim Miller (RISE) and Lex Chalat (thinkBeyond).

U.S.-based sports organizations are encouraged to use the free tool to help support their work to advance racial equity across the sector.

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ABOUT BEYOND SPORT

Since 2008, Beyond Sport has supported initiatives, generated ideas and built partnerships that purposefully use sport to address the world's most pressing social issues. Employing a unique and holistic approach, Beyond Sport's programs leverage a global network of sport for social change innovators, progressive organizations and expertise built up over more than a decade to tackle issues head on and collectively. Through 2020, the organization has provided \$4.7M in grants and \$9.5M worth of capacity-building support to 490 projects in 150 countries. Beyond Sport is a US 501(c)(3) nonprofit and UK registered charity. beyondsport.org

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. playequityfund.org

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