

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date: 9/4/18

Contact Information:

Organization Name: Phoenixville Area Police Athletic League
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Year Incorporated: 1999

Has your nonprofit ever applied to the Community Foundation? Yes No Not Sure

Has your nonprofit ever received funding from the Community Foundation? Yes No Not Sure

Donor Advised Fund(s) Fund for Chester County Don't know/Not sure

Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture & Humanities Environment/Animal Welfare Education

Health Human Services Religion

Organization Information:

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): Primarily Phoenixville with some participants from Spring City and Royersford

Describe Population Served and Annual Number of People Served: 250 children and youth, ages 4-21, many of whom come from lower income, at risk and fragmented families.

Mission: To advance the well-being of youth in the Phoenixville and surrounding area through participation in individual and team sports and educational activities while teaching life values and community service.

Proposal Summary: Our request is for a \$5,000 grant to support for our programs on behalf of children and youth in the greater Phoenixville area.

If Capacity Building Proposal:

Mission, Vision & Strategy Governance & Leadership Strategic Relationships

Fundraising & Development Operations Other:

Annual Budget \$55,750

77 % of budget for program expenses

14 % of budget for administrative expenses

9 % of budget for fundraising expenses

100 % total

0 (1 p/t staff) # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

5 # of Board Volunteers

40 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

3,600 # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources: Phoenixville Community Health Foundation, John Lazarich Foundation, Schuylkill Township, Genuardi Family Foundation, and our annual golf tournament.

Grant Amount Requested from CCCF: \$5,000

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

1. Organization's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness

The Phoenixville Area PAL was created in 1999 by Schuylkill Township police officer James E. Deoria, who had spent eight years as a professional boxer. Because no chapter of the PAL existed between Norristown and West Chester, Officer Deoria had no difficulty convincing Schuylkill Township, East Pikeland Township, and the Borough of Phoenixville to support the start of the Phoenixville Area PAL. Since its inception in 1999, the Phoenixville area PAL has expanded from a single, after-school boxing program to a year-round series of programs for at-risk youth in the area. ***Unlike other programs in the community, PAL offers a unique benefit—a police officer as a leader, mentor and role model.*** PAL's founder and part-time Executive Director is a member of the Schuylkill Township Police Force; this police presence provides numerous advantages, including giving at-risk youth opportunities to build positive relationships and receive mentoring and guidance from a police officer in a non-threatening environment.

Studies have shown that if a child respects a police officer on the ball field or in the gym, he or she will be more likely to respect the laws the officer enforces. The Justice Department of the United States also recommends that effective, community-based programs for at-risk youth include ***“a strong police presence, a structured youth organization, and wholesome skill-building activities where youth can find fun after school.”***

PAL Objectives include:

- To provide at-risk children with positive role models and fun, productive activities after school that foster good decision making, leadership, and bridge cultures, socioeconomic groups and communities;
- To provide at-risk youth with opportunities for supervised physical activity, through participation in team and individual sports;
- To teach at-risk youth appropriate and constructive ways to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence and to introduce them to mechanisms for controlling their frustrations, anger, and aggression;
- To develop interpersonal skills at a point in their lives when youth are at the edge of their maturity, barely aware of how to interact effectively with peers and elders, having learned most social behaviors from imperfect role models; and
- To proactively address a variety of issues, including healthy choices, character building, childhood obesity, self-esteem and self-confidence, teenage pregnancy, domestic violence, and family isolation.

The following testimonials from a parent of a PAL participant describes the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the PAL program:

As parents of four junior wrestlers, we feel truly blessed that our children have this wrestling opportunity in the Phoenixville area. The Board Members, the School District, and all of the coaches facilitate an exceptional atmosphere for proper wrestling instruction, which in our opinion not only produces quality wrestlers, but it also produces quality citizens. Just to say that PAL adds value to our lives is an understatement, because PAL truly facilitates an environment and atmosphere that improve the collective community!

Some youth are now second-generation PAL participants! We are proud that several kids have parents who attended our PAL program when they were young. This speaks to the long-term benefits that PAL offers.

In 2017 more than 30 volunteers contributed more than 5,000 hours of service as coaches, mentors, board and committee members, event planners and fund raisers. More than 30 foundations, corporations, small businesses, and organizations contributed to keeping Phoenixville PAL up and running. Additionally, our volunteers ran several special events, including our very popular and highly successful golf tournament, attended by scores of caring individuals. In 2017 the tournament raised more than \$8,000 to benefit PAL.

2. Funding request:

A. Description of key initiatives

PAL is much more than an after-school sports program: PAL cultivates and improves the moral and civic standards of the youth in the community with educational, social, and athletic activities designed to engage and support them in making positive life decisions. The goal is to provide structure, strong, “streetwise” adult guidance, and to teach life values and civic standards through participation in team and individual sports. PAL currently engages and keeps safe approximately 250 primarily low-income, at-risk children and youth. Funding will be used to support PAL’s programs: boxing, wrestling, golf, computer programming, and a babysitting certification program.

The following is a brief description of these programs:

BOXING CLUB: the program is offered year round to boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 21.

Boxing provides a safe and healthy outlet for aggression and the need to compete; daily physicals and medical attention are required for each athlete during competition. The equipment used is also regulated and must pass strict safety guidelines in order to be approved by Boxing's national governing body, USA Boxing. Boxing’s value to its participants lies in the fact that success is dependent solely on the individual athlete and his or her work ethic in preparing for competition.

YOUTH WRESTLING CLUB: This program is open to all children between the ages of 4 to 14. At the upper levels it is offered in partnership with Phoenixville Middle and High schools. PAL wrestling provides students who could not make their school wrestling teams an opportunity to compete and is open to students from other schools. Practice is two nights a week.

GOLF CLINIC: This extremely popular summer program is offered through a special collaboration with Pickering Valley Golf Course and is open to children ages 7-13. Children learn golf fundamentals from a golf professional in the five-week program.

BABYSITTING CLUB: This program is offered through a collaboration with the Chester County 4-H program and teaches youth ages 11-17 the basics of child development and childcare skills, including CPR training. Youth who successfully complete the program receive a certificate of achievement and are qualified to be hired as a babysitter. This program was so popular that in 2017 we offered it twice to more than 60 teens.

COMPUTER PROGRAMMING: This free program is taught by Chris Brickhouse, a computer professional and experienced teacher. The 10-week class is offered three times/year to approximately 10 students ages 15-18, and is excellent preparation for post-high school education. In 2017 PAL used some of its reserve fund to purchase computers to launch this class. Website development is taught from the ground up, utilizing tools used in workplaces, with a focus on tried and tested techniques for building web-based applications. The class offers real life, real time experience, teaching students valuable and marketable skills they can use to freelance, obtain jobs, or to just have fun.

B. Specific needs and issues to be addressed

The goal of the PAL programs is to address the root causes of a variety of emotional health problems and risky behaviors, including drug and alcohol abuse, violence, poor nutrition, lack of exercise, etc. At PAL at-risk children and teens experience caring, adult role models and productive activities after school that foster teamwork, build leadership skills, enhance self-esteem and self-confidence, encourage engagement in formal education and train how to make positive choices to support fruitful and constructive lifestyles.

The potential for self-destructive behaviors in children and teens can be greatly reduced by programs that provide identity reinforcement, self-esteem development and a sense of belonging. In addition, meaningful connections with caring adults help to promote community and civic participation. Research also demonstrates that high-quality after-school programming improves student achievement, reduces crime by and against youth, and promotes positive social development.

C. Why it is important to fund this now

Research has shown that the after-school hours are the prime time when children and youth can get into trouble via gang activity, juvenile crime, substance abuse, violence, teen pregnancy and other perilous behaviors.

Unsupervised youth are also most likely to get into car accidents during these hours. *“One in five violent crimes occurs in the 3 to 4 hours following the end of the school day,”* says national PAL Director Brad Hart. A majority of the at-risk children and youth served by PAL come from single parent families headed by women; some may have a parent who is incarcerated, or comes from violent situations. The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) of the U. S. Department of Justice has conducted extensive research on youth violence over the past 20 years. In *“Partnerships to Prevent Youth Violence,”* BJA indicates, *“Across the country, virtually no community has been untouched by the increasing number of incidents of youth violence.”* The publication continues: *“The alliance against youth violence complements the movement within policing toward greater collaborations between law enforcement and community residents.”*

3. How impact and results will be demonstrated

PAL programs operate year-round; activities increase during the school semesters. The following outcomes will occur as a result of participation in PAL programs:

- Decision-making and leadership skills will be enhanced, as evidenced by an increase in positive, personal behavioral decisions and demonstrating leadership during group activities.
- Self-reliance, accountability, confidence and self-esteem will be strengthened, as evidenced by self-reports and observations by program leaders.
- The incidence of drug and alcohol abuse, early teen pregnancy, gang activity and other juvenile offenses will decrease, as evidenced by self-reports and police reports.
- Youth will learn new conflict resolution skills for positively dealing with their aggression and anger, as evidenced by self-reports and observations by program leaders.

After each program ends, each participant is asked to complete an evaluation form about the program, including some simple questions about how participating in the program may have impacted his/her life. Leaders also complete program evaluations that include documentation of observed behavioral changes in the youth. Evaluation information is reviewed by the Executive Director and the Board of Directors.

The following story from one of our parents is an example of the anecdotal information we receive concerning the success of our programs:

Your program has changed my son’s life in unspeakable ways. He absolutely loves your program which has instilled some confidence in his abilities that forever changed his life. The discipline he has received in this art makes him a better person. I want to thank you for the opportunity your program offers to make my son a better future man. Thank you for all that you and your staff do to make our next generation greater.