



NATIONAL PAL

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ATHLETIC/ACTIVITIES LEAGUES, INC.

Fall 2024 Newsletter

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Kids, Cops & Communities

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Message from our National PAL Board President

Greetings Local PAL Chapters,

I hope this fall is going well and the youth you serve are safe and thriving this school year. As mentors, we are the curators of our future society. The task you perform daily mentoring, coaching, and teaching our youth is critically important in imparting the values required to becoming productive and successful citizens.

YOU ARE THE TRUE SUPERHEROES OF SOCIETY.

I'm extremely excited to share with you, currently our staff and board has started laying the foundation to modify the infrastructure of National PAL to ensure we are incorporating the best organizational practices for non-profits. These practices entail the enhancement of our fundraising, marketing, branding, and data collection efforts. It's my belief that under our new leadership and direction we are taking the necessary steps to position National PAL to compete for and attract unrestricted dollars in the future. However, please realize this is a process that consists of developing new relationships and cultivating current relationships. Your cooperation in all data collection initiatives from National PAL is greatly needed and appreciated to ensure that all your outstanding youth engagements efforts are accurately captured. **Simply put, we need your help to thoroughly tell our story nationally and internationally!**

Additionally, you can anticipate receiving information about the new mentoring grant, plans to conduct a strategic planning retreat to establish a 5-year strategic plan for National PAL, and the unveiling of a youth substance awareness program curriculum in 2025 which should open doors of financial opportunity for local chapters to apply for opioid abatement dollars in your respective jurisdictions. On behalf of the National PAL Board, we wish you and your families an enjoyable holiday season!

With warmest regards,



Kenneth L. Ragland
National PAL Board President

Grant Update: Exciting News from National PAL

We are excited to announce that National PAL has been awarded the 2025 DOJ Mentor Grant! This grant represents a fantastic opportunity for our network, and we will be sharing more details in the coming months—so stay tuned!



Grants like this can be a great way to support your Chapter's efforts and serve even more youth in your community. Just a reminder: to apply for any National PAL grants, your Chapter must be a member in good standing. The upcoming grant application will only be available to registered members, so make sure your Chapter is up to date. Don't miss out on this opportunity! Register as a National PAL member today by visiting www.nationalpal.org.

We also encourage all Chapters to get involved in locations across the country. If your Chapter is located in one of the following states, you may have a chance to receive additional grant funding. Please reach out to the grants team to learn more about this exciting opportunity:

- Alaska (AK)
- Arizona (AZ)
- Colorado (CO)
- Hawaii (HI)
- Iowa (IA)
- Idaho (ID)
- Illinois (IL)
- Indiana (IN)
- Kentucky (KY)
- Maine (ME)
- Missouri (MO)
- Mississippi (MS)
- Montana (MT)
- North Dakota (ND)
- Nebraska (NE)
- South Carolina (SC)
- Texas (TX)
- Utah (UT)
- Vermont (VT)
- Wisconsin (WI)
- West Virginia (WV)
- Wyoming (WY)

For any questions regarding grants, feel free to reach out to Angela Caffee at acaffee@nationalpal.org.

Website Enhancements & Social Media Improvements

Over the past few months, we have been working with marketing specialists *Uniquely Driven* to give our National PAL website a fresh look! These updates aim to make it easier for you to stay informed and connected. We will continue to keep the website updated with the latest news and information about PAL programs and events.



In addition, we are rolling out an enhanced social media content schedule to better highlight the incredible work happening across our member Chapters. Our goal is to create posts that focus on key PAL topics and showcase your hard work and dedication to your communities. Stay tuned for more updates as we refine this process!

Membership Registration is now Open!

We are excited to announce that membership registration is now open! Please see below for the new pricing options and schedule of pricing changes.

2024-2025 CHAPTER REGISTRATION FEES

Individual Registration:

- *Early Bird:* \$625 (10/1/24 - 12/31/24)
- *Regular:* \$675 (1/1/25 - 2/28/25)
- *Late:* \$725 (3/1/25 - 9/30/25)

2-Year Registration:

- *Early Bird:* \$1150 (10/1/24 - 12/31/24)
- *Regular:* \$1250 (1/1/25 - 2/28/25)
- *Late:* \$1350 (3/1/25 - 9/30/25)



This is a reminder that all chapters must register in order to continue being part of the National PAL network. If you have any questions about membership and the registration process, please contact John Stevens at jstevens@nationalpal.org.

Feature: Vernon PAL Youth Leadership Group

The Vernon PAL Youth Leadership Group wanted to give back to their community and decided to enhance their new walking trail, which leads to the local pump track. After brainstorming several ideas, they chose to install exercise equipment along the trail to encourage physical health.

The Chapter regularly discusses the importance of both mental and physical wellness, and this project aligns with their goal of promoting a healthier lifestyle for their town.

In early September, Vernon PAL partnered with the local DPW to install the exercise equipment and worked with the town to paint the storage shed on-site, making the area even more welcoming.



The Effects of Seasonal Affective Disorder

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that occurs at specific times of the year, typically during the fall and winter months when daylight hours are shorter. Its effects are directly related to the decrease in exposure to natural light and physical activity. This condition can affect both children and adults, though the symptoms and impacts may vary across age groups.

POTENTIAL EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

Children with SAD may exhibit a range of symptoms that can affect their daily lives and overall well-being. These symptoms may be (but aren't limited to):

- **Mood Changes** exhibited by persistent sad, irritable, hopeless, sensitivity to criticism, and/or negative thinking.
- **Energy Levels** may drop and increased fatigue can cause difficulty for children to participate in activities they usually enjoy.
- **Sleep Patterns** may range from oversleeping to difficulty waking up.
- **Academic Performance Issues** may manifest in problems with concentration/lack of motivation can lead to challenges in school.
- **Social Withdrawal** may occur as symptoms worsen with children withdrawing from social interactions, preferring to stay alone rather than engage with friends.

POTENTIAL EFFECTS ON ADULTS

Adults with SAD often experience symptoms similar to those of general depression, but these symptoms are specifically tied to seasonal changes:

- **Depressive Symptoms** may cause adults to feel sad, anxious, or "empty" most of the day, nearly every day, during the affected season.
- **Energy Levels** often decrease, leading to fatigue and a lack of interest in activities once enjoyed.
- **Sleep and Appetite Changes** might cause oversleeping and increased appetite, particularly craving carbohydrate-rich foods, which can lead to weight gain.
- **Cognitive Effects** can lead to difficulty concentrating, making decisions, and remembering things.
- **Social and Occupational Withdrawal** due to (SAD) issues can manifest as problems at work.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Both children and adults can benefit from various treatments for SAD, including:

- **Light Therapy:** Exposure to bright light that mimics natural sunlight can help alleviate symptoms. Artificial Light products can be found on Amazon and other online sources.
- **Exercise:** Making sure that even in the months where there is less light that we are still being active and getting the appropriate amount of exercise.
- **Nutrition:** Continuing to eat a healthy balanced diet regardless of cravings.
- **Psychotherapy:** Cognitive-behavioral therapy helps address negative thought patterns.
- **Medications:** Antidepressants may be prescribed to help manage severe symptoms but only with the direction of a psychiatrist or medical doctor.

It is important for individuals experiencing symptoms of SAD to seek professional help. Early intervention can significantly improve quality of life and help manage the condition effectively throughout the year. If you or someone you know is struggling with SAD, don't hesitate to reach out to a healthcare provider for support and guidance. If you feel the situation is life threatening, call 911 or take the individual to the nearest Hospital Emergency Room.

Welcome New National PAL Staff

DR. STEPHEN COAN

Executive Director and COO

National PAL is proud to welcome Dr. Stephen Coan as National PAL's new Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer. Dr. Coan, a senior administrator at Ripon College in Wisconsin, has been a national leader in creating partnerships between higher education, youth services, and K12 education for decades. He will lead National PAL's operations and strategic growth.

A Boston native from a law enforcement family, Dr. Coan previously served on the police commission in Stonington, Connecticut. He is also a trustee of the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation and a commissioner with the New England Commission for Higher Education. He holds a master's in youth services management and a PhD in social policy from Brandeis University.



KATRESE JOHNSON

Federal Grant Administrative Assistant

National PAL is thrilled to announce the addition of Katrese Johnson as the new Finance & Federal Grant Administrative Assistant. With over 15 years of experience in Human Resources, Katrese brings expertise in compliance, budgeting, documentation, auditing, and reporting. She will play a crucial role in ensuring that National PAL maximizes the impact of its funding to further the organization's mission.



New Technology Partner: SportsMarkit

National PAL is excited to announce that SportsMarkit, an international leader in providing flexible, scalable, online payment, communication, event management and engagement tools is now National PAL's official sports management platform technology sponsor replacing our relationship with SportsEngine.

"This new partnership will give PAL Chapters the ability to create new hosted websites at no cost, updated sports and event registration technology, tools to do promotions on social media, and payment processing at a reduced fee with up-to-date technology," Chris Hill, CEO of National PAL stated.

SportsMarkit is a national leader in technology solutions for organizations like PAL Chapters and more broadly in sports management platform technology. The partnership is a multi-year agreement. SportsMarkit is also offering an upgraded service package to PAL Chapters at significantly reduced rates. The package includes a customized web site, advanced background checks and database, and upgraded team and league management and communications capabilities. PAL Chapters are encouraged to sign-up to switch from SportsEngine to SportsMarkit platforms with their 2025 registration.

Feature: International Boxing Event Recap

National PAL, in collaboration with Oxnard PAL, recently hosted an incredible international boxing event that showcased the talent and resilience of nearly 800 male and female boxers, ranging from ages 9 to 40. Divided into competitive age groups (9/10, 11/12, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18, and 19-40), the athletes brought their best to the ring, with technical skills and sportsmanship displayed at the highest level.

The event kicked off early, with 200 participants lining up as early as 7 a.m. to register. Thanks to the teamwork between National PAL and Oxnard PAL, the entire event was incredibly efficient and well-organized. Pre- and post-fight weigh-ins, along with thorough medical exams performed by a diverse team of doctors (three of four were people of color), ensured the safety of the athletes. Protective equipment of the highest quality further emphasized the focus on safety, while the competitive spirit among boxers, coaches, and referees was palpable throughout the event. Customer service, especially from Oxnard PAL, stood out, contributing to a positive and welcoming atmosphere for all participants and attendees.



Looking ahead, we plan to expand our mental health support at future events. This includes offering pre- and post-fight mental health exams, as well as mental health and performance clinics for both boxers and coaches. We also aim to provide a drop-in counseling area and include education on nutrition, sleep, mindfulness, and meditation. These initiatives reflect National PAL's commitment to promoting not only physical fitness but also the mental and emotional well-being of athletes and their support teams.

Feature: Michigan "Girls in Sports" Day



PAL of Oakland County, Michigan "Girls in Sports" Day welcomed dozens of girls from across the region for a day of sports sampling, exciting giveaways, and fun activities. Partnering with various organizations, they created an empowering environment for girls to explore sports and build confidence.

Alongside this event, the Chapter's mentoring days, community service learning activities, and family engagement sessions provided youth with opportunities to participate in activities that nurtured their physical, mental, and emotional well-being, fostering growth and community support.

Feature: Coolin' with Cops - Bridging Communities and Keeping Youth Safe

This summer, Detroit PAL's inaugural *Coolin' with Cops* program made a positive impact both on and off the field. In partnership with Chase Bank, the Detroit Police Department, and the City of Detroit Health Department, the program brought law enforcement officers and Detroit's youth together, offering hydration and fostering trust through meaningful interactions.

The idea behind *Coolin' with Cops* was simple: provide a safe, welcoming space for youth and their families during Detroit PAL football practices. Officers delivered water to ensure participants stayed hydrated during the heat of summer practices. But more than that, they became part of the community, engaging with youth and their families in ways that built lasting connections.



As players took to the field, officers were present—not just as bystanders, but as active supporters—helping create an environment of trust. Alongside this, Chase Bank provided financial resources to families, and Ceasefire, a program from the City of Detroit Health Department, shared important messages about gun safety and youth violence prevention. Over the course of the program, *Coolin' with Cops* supported 10 football teams and impacted more than 2,000 youth. Weekly visits from the Detroit Police Department Chaplain Corp brought an added sense of community and care to each event.



While the program has wrapped up for the season, its effects will last far beyond the summer. Through small gestures, like offering a bottle of water, *Coolin' with Cops* helped foster stronger relationships between law enforcement and the community, making Detroit a safer and brighter city for its youth.

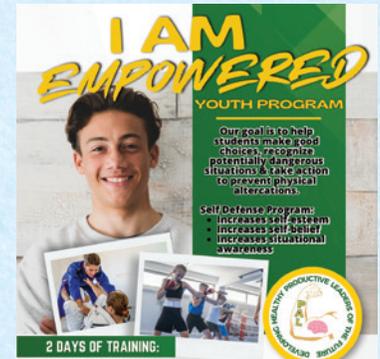
Feature: Martin County PAL “I Am Empowered” Program

Martin County PAL is proud to introduce their latest initiative, the “I Am Empowered” Youth Program, aimed at equipping middle school students with the tools they need to navigate life with confidence and resilience. This sixteen-week program, currently running with twenty students already registered, provides a unique blend of self-defense training (including boxing and jiu-jitsu), life-skills development, situational awareness, and self-confidence building—creating a dynamic environment where kids can grow both mentally and physically.

This program’s focus is to help students:

- Make smart choices
- Recognize and navigate dangerous situations
- Build self-esteem and confidence through self-defense techniques

By empowering their youth with these skills, Martin County PAL aims to inspire future leaders who are confident, aware, and capable of making positive choices. The program aligns with their mission to develop healthy, productive leaders for the future, and they are excited to witness the growth and transformation happening within this cohort of young champions!



This program runs twice a week and provides a holistic approach to personal safety, self-esteem building, and situational awareness—focusing on prevention over confrontation. Martin County PAL is eager to continue growing this initiative and making an impactful difference in their community.

To hear updates and inspiring stories from Martin County PAL, follow them on social media:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/martincountypal>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/martincountypal>
- Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/@MartinCountyPAL>



Spotlight: Donald Yorie, Suffolk County PAL

Congratulations to Director of Development for the Suffolk County Police Athletic League, Donald Yorie, on being inducted into the **Suffolk Sports Hall of Fame**. He is pictured with the Executive Director of the Sports Hall of Fame, Chris Vaccaro. Mr. Yorie retired from the Suffolk County Police Department in 2009 after 34 years of service. His last assignment was 13 years as a PAL officer. The Suffolk PAL Board of Directors, recognizing his value to the organization, immediately hired him in 2009, initially as a grant writer, where he quickly moved into his current role as Director of Development.

In this role, Mr. Yorie has spearheaded fundraising efforts as well as program development and has raised over two million dollars for programs and the building of a sports complex. He is actively involved in community and government affairs and is well-known throughout the community. His unanimous nomination by the Board of Trustees of the Suffolk Sports Hall of Fame for this prestigious honor came as no surprise. As a PAL officer, he developed many new programs supporting the Chapter's mission of preventing youth from juvenile delinquency. He has received many accolades both locally and nationally for his work with youth and program development.



Don is pictured with fellow Suffolk Sports Hall of Fame 2024 inductee Keith Hernandez and Suffolk PAL Vice President Scott Zambelli at the induction ceremony.

The Suffolk Sports Hall of Fame is a non-profit established in 1990 to honor outstanding people who have made substantial contributions in the fields of professional and amateur sports on behalf of themselves and Suffolk County. The Suffolk Sports Hall of Fame selection committee meets in the fall to deliberate over candidates and select the

next induction class. All inductees must generate at least 65 percent of voter support to gain induction. Currently, there are 419 inductees in the Hall. The Hall has exhibits all throughout Suffolk County including Ducks Stadium and Islip MacArthur Airport.



Feature: Riverside County PAL's 20th Anniversary

The Riverside County PAL Chapter celebrated their 20th anniversary by hosting an event for their PAL families, local law enforcement departments, and community partners. Together they gathered to enjoy food, a photobooth, outdoor games, a keynote speaker, awards, and hear about upcoming programs.

The Chapter presented awards for "Mentee of the Year", "Officer of the Year", "Rookie of the Year", and "Mozingo Legacy Award". These awards went to mentees and mentors who have displayed admirable participation and have been positive influences in the program. The "Mozingo Legacy Award" is named after Corporal Matthew Mozingo, a long-time partner who has shown the uttermost dedication for the chapter's programs, and who has consistently had their best interest over the years. In addition to these awards, they recognized their local law enforcement departments who have shown commitment to their continuing partnership with the Chapter. PAL alumni were also recognized for their continued contributions to the community and being involved in youth mentoring themselves, as a result of their time with the Riverside County PAL.

Riverside County PAL had over 100 guests attend their anniversary event. Guests were able to have fun taking photos at the photobooth and playing outdoor games such as jumbo connect four, jenga and cornhole. Guests had the opportunity to hear from Kimberle Smith Austin, a transformational speaker, who shared about the "Magic of Mentoring". The Chapter continues to grow in size, partnerships and programs. Next year in 2025, Riverside County PAL will be starting a PAL Alum Advisory Council, as well as a USA Archery certified program, and will be hosting a week-long camp with Camp HOPE America.



Youth Spotlight: Angel T., Stanislaus County PAL

In the summer of 2023, the Stanislaus County PAL organized a field trip to the Exploratorium in San Francisco, taking more than a dozen PAL kids for an enriching experience. Deputy Director Agustin Torres served as a chaperone for about ten of the kids, including Angel T.

Upon arriving, they realized that keeping the group together was challenging due to the museum's layout and the number of visitors. Activities were spread out, and most exhibits had lines, making it hard to keep track of everyone. Sensing the situation, Angel, the eldest in the group, stepped up and offered to help. He told Deputy Torres, "I'll watch half of the group and you can watch the other half." Together, they managed the kids, with Angel providing much-needed support. His help not only made things smoother but also allowed Deputy Torres to enjoy the exhibits alongside the children.

Later, during lunch, Deputy Torres and the kids talked about their future career aspirations. Angel shared his dream of becoming a law enforcement officer. Seizing the opportunity, Deputy Torres discussed career paths within the Sheriff's Office, including the volunteer Explorer Program. Angel then opened up about his life at home, sharing that he was the oldest of eight siblings. A few months after the trip, Deputy Torres learned that Angel had entered the background check process for the Sheriff's Explorer Program. He successfully passed and began attending meetings, quickly becoming a role model for his fellow Explorers.

Since then, Angel has participated in an Explorer Competition, helping his team place first, second, and third in various scenarios against other agencies. Despite facing personal challenges, he remains committed to being a positive influence on his siblings and goes out of his way to attend events hosted by both the Sheriff's Office and the local PAL. If you ask Angel about PAL, he will tell you with a smile, "PAL has been good for me."



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