Mentoring Spotlight: National PAL CEO Visits Casper Boxing Club PAL

While visiting Douglas, WY for a meeting with USA Judo, National PAL CEO, Jeff Hood, made the most of the trip by staying and visiting with nearby Casper Boxing Club (CBC) PAL in Casper, WY. CBC PAL began in 2017, with the support of the Mills Police Department, and despite their smaller size, they represent the state of Wyoming as the only National PAL Mentoring program in the state. The Chapter currently serves between 21 and 30 youth, all of who finished the Habitudes curriculum during the 2020 NPAL Mentoring Program year with Chief Bryon Preciado and Officer Terry Good serving as mentors.

During his visit, Hood met with Casper Police Department Chief of Police, Keith McPheeters, and CBC staff visited with Hood and had a full discussion on the NPAL Mentoring program, as well as personal issues that are dealt with on a daily basis. CBC Executive Director, Clayton Jensen; Finance Coordinator, Gerri Luers; and Gloria Jensen were also able to enjoy a dinner out with Hood during the visit. The highlight of the visit was when Hood met some older mentees at CBC PAL. Hood sat and spoke with the youth about current events and their expressed feelings on racism and the pandemic.

A fairly new mentee to the program had been affected by racism and began to cry during the discussion, but this moment was seen as a breakthrough, which allowed others within the mentoring group session to be more forthcoming of the issues around racism within their schools and community. The youth now have Hood’s number and some of them have been communicating with him since. Hood joined the group’s mentoring session on April 29th virtually to follow-up from their meeting and check-in on how things are going.
Sara Trexler Named Director of Development & Marketing for National PAL

National PAL recently announced that Sara Trexler will join the National PAL team, as its new Director of Development & Marketing, effective Monday, April 12th, 2021. Trexler, a native of Charlotte, NC and a proven community leader with over 20+ years of experience in the non-profit and sports administration sector, had most recently served as the Director of Development for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Carolinas (BBBSCC).

“We at National PAL are delighted to welcome Sara Trexler to our staff,” states Jeff Hood, National PAL’s Chief Executive Officer. Professionally, Sara consistently earned awards and recognition for exceeding revenue and profitable organizational goals, while implementing and utilizing best practice programs and fund development strategies.

Sara’s commitment, past experience and successful achievements within the field of fund development and strategic partnership creation, along with her alignment with our organization’s established mission of mentorship amongst kids, cops and communities, makes her a valued addition to the National PAL team.

- Jeff Hood, Chief Executive Officer, National PAL

Sara consistently increased organization revenue year after year by at least 11%, while raising over $2 million a year. With her organizational success and achievements, she was recognized and awarded the 2020 BBBSA National Gold Standard for Program Excellence Award, as well as, the 2020 BBBSCC Employee of the Year Award.

Sara, a former collegiate student athlete while at the University of North Carolina Charlotte, has always “sought opportunities that could combine her love of sports, with her passion for mentoring youth and National PAL is that perfect combination,” states Sara Trexler. When not at work, Sara, her significant other and their four kids enjoy spending time biking, throwing a football, participating in a host of outdoor activities and spending time with their puppy Rhys.
On April 20\textsuperscript{th}, National PAL CEO, Jeff Hood, attended a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Law Enforcement Roundtable, consisting of virtual discussions with law enforcement association leadership and Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas. During the event, Hood spoke on behalf of 1.5 million PAL kids and thousands of law enforcement officers serving and engaging kids, cops and community across the country.

When presented with the opportunity to ask Secretary Mayorkas a question, Hood asked “from your perspective, what safeguards would you recommend for our communities’ youth relative to cyber security and how might youth be proactive within this space? Additionally, what funding streams might be available for youth initiatives around cyber security for the establishing of micro-credentialing institutes in development of career pathways?”

Secretary Mayorkas’ response declared that there are 12 excellent education programs in cyber security and infrastructure security in partnership with the Secret Service. Secretary Mayorkas also noted that he had a great conversation with the Girl Scouts of America several weeks ago, mentioning that they give cyber badges and have a whole program to credential young women and empower them in the cyber security arena. It was also suggested that the three groups get together to do a more encompassing effort with youth regardless of gender – National PAL is looking forward to taking the next steps in this partnership.

With recently having hosted our 76\textsuperscript{th} Annual National PAL Training & Conference, held August 17–20, 2021 in New Orleans, LA, National PAL wanted to first thank and give warm appreciation to those of you who attended and participated in this year’s awesome and exciting event. We must also admit, that since the conclusion of this year’s training and conference, we have had several attendees call, text or email our staff stating how Informative, Thought Provoking, Engaging, Organized, and Wonderful the event was, and how much they are already looking forward to next year’s Training and Conference.
A few takeaways from this year’s training and conference:

- Increased participation by 75 people over the previous two (2) conferences
- Increased the number of exhibitors
- Implemented temperature checks, hand sanitizer stations, required masks and socially distanced seating during conference events to ensure safety
- Knowledgeable professionals conducted trainings and breakout sessions
- Attendees received an awesome SWAG Bag full of gifts to enjoy
- Hosted National PAL Town Hall Panel Discussion with renowned guest panelists
- Entertainment by Richmond, CA PAL’s Youth Band and Comedian and Actor Tommy Davidson
- Announced National PAL Inspirational Award Winners of the Year

CONGRATULATIONS again to the 2020-2021 National PAL Inspirational Award Winners

YOUTH OF THE YEAR: Jeremiah Whitley – City of Miami, FL PAL
LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER OF THE YEAR: Abbigail Isenhour – Vacaville, CA PAL
VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: Alexis John – Durham, NC PAL
ALUMNI OF THE YEAR: My’Asia Mills – Atlantic City, NJ PAL

Save the Date for the 77th Annual National PAL Conference, May 31 – June 3, 2022 at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Conference registration and hotel information will be available this fall and available on the NPAL website: https://nationalpal.org.
When the idea of a newly formed PAL Chapter in Syracuse, NY was brought to attention by a New York City PAL alum, local leaders saw no better opportunity than to bring together a group of individuals and build a foundation to strengthen the relationships and address the issues between youth and police in Syracuse. In August 2020, 14 leaders, including local and state police officers, clergy, educators and the District Attorney, started meeting to establish goals, develop the charter and market their newly formed Syracuse PAL Chapter. Officially chartered in February 2021, Syracuse PAL is set to begin programming in September 2021.

With Syracuse being known for basketball, Syracuse PAL will offer the sport as their first activity/league for youth in grades 3-8 and will be coached by local police officers in an effort to begin developing positive relationships between youth and law enforcement in the community. In addition to basketball, Syracuse PAL will offer a Youth Graduate Program, which will require youth to attend school 96% of the time, meet with a caring adult mentor for one hour per week and provide their report cards to show how they are doing in school. Syracuse PAL Executive Director, Jimmy Oliver, indicates that statistics show students who receive a ‘C’ or better in their core classes, have a significantly greater chance of graduating high school and the Chapter hopes to support these statistics through the Youth Graduate Program.

Oliver has also been tasked with putting together the Syracuse PAL Board of Directors, which is expected to be announced in June 2021. Syracuse PAL will be offering 4 summer camps in July targeting 6-12-year-old youth and expect to have about 100 youth at each camp. The camps activities will consist of soccer, football, dance/African drums and basketball and will be hosted at school and park and recreation partner sites. To reach older youth in the Syracuse community, the Chapter plans to host a “March Madness” event in line with the annual NCAA basketball tournament for youth ages 13-18 to come to the Chapter and talk with business owners and local leaders about school, employment and other opportunities for youth.

Oliver says that one of the biggest goals for Syracuse PAL is “to be the safe place where kids can come and be kids and have hope to be what they want to be. We want to be the program that goes above and beyond consistently.” With that in mind, Syracuse PAL is striving to provide life changing experiences and resources for youth so when they are older, they will return to volunteer at the Chapter and continue to advocate for the next generation. On the behalf of Syracuse PAL, Oliver would like to thank National PAL CEO, Jeff Hood, and his staff for coaching them through this process. In response, National PAL is pleased to welcome Syracuse PAL to the NPAL family and is looking forward to building our relationship and providing opportunities for the youth of Syracuse, NY to further our mission of kids, cops and community.
For some time, Rocky River High School (Mint Hill, NC) students had been seeking the opportunity to speak with leaders in their community about local and national issues and more specifically, current events taking place nationwide around law enforcement interactions with people of color. Through committed efforts from Darrell Gregory (Mint Hill PAL Program Manager), distinguished panelists, and Rocky River High School, a virtual event to do just that was made possible.

On April 22nd, Mint Hill PAL hosted a virtual panel discussion with young people at Rocky River High School to discuss relevant events and topics relating to law enforcement interactions with people of color. Panel participants included Jeff Hood, National PAL CEO; Corine Mack, President of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg NAACP; Spencer Merriweather, Charlotte-Mecklenburg District Attorney; Judge Donald Cureton; Judge Kimberly Best; Lt. Gilman of the Mint Hill Police Department; Chief Stone, Director of Law Enforcement at Mecklenburg County Alcohol Beverage Control Board; Mint Hill PAL board members; and many more.

The discussion, facilitated by Mr. Gregory, started with introductions and welcomes from the panelists and quickly transitioned to a question-and-answer session, as questions and concerns from students came piling in the chat box. The discussion covered a variety of issues ranging from local police policies and procedures, police interactions with people of color, corrective actions needed to address these issues, and a number of other important topics. Throughout the discussion, Corine Mack commended the youth for having these discussions, saying “now is the time for every student coming on the call to realize that they are our leaders of today, not tomorrow.” District Attorney Merriweather also reminded the young people that “by having these conversations, change may not come tomorrow, but your conscious is being built today.”

As the discussion wrapped up and it was time for students to return to class, panelists gave thanks to the participants and encouraged them to continue to have these conversations by reaching out directly to their community leaders to identify ways to address and resolve the issues at hand. Jeff Hood also closed by announcing that National PAL would be hosting Charlotte, NC as a stop on the Voices of Youth Community Town Hall Series, reminding the audience of the importance for youth to have a seat at the table, express their thoughts and opinions, so their voices are heard.
MONTHLY INSPIRATIONAL AWARDS NOMINATIONS

As we celebrate the amazing accomplishments of the 2021 Inspirational Award winners, we know that every PAL Chapter has amazing stories of community impact, overcoming adversity, and dedication to changing lives of children and families in your community. We need YOUR PAL to tell us those stories. Kicking off again this fall, NPAL will be accepting nominations for the Inspirational Awards. Monthly winners will be selected from September 2021 through April 2022 on the 5th day of the month for the month prior. I.e., the monthly award for September, will be selected on October 5th. The process for nominations is on-going, so if they aren’t selected for a particular month, they remain in selection pool future consideration.

What We Need from PAL Chapters

• SUBMIT YOUR NOMINATIONS NOW and then monthly on the NPAL Website or click this [LINK], then choose your award category
  o Law Enforcement
  o Youth
  o Volunteer – Any community member or volunteer who supports your PAL (Paid staff do not qualify)
  o PAL Alumni – PAL Alumni can be any youth 18+ who was a registered participant at any time.
• PAL Chapters should submit a minimum of one application for each of the four (4) categories per year, so four (4) applications total.
• Be sure to include a high-resolution photo of the nominee. This should be a picture of ONLY the Nominee, no group pictures).

Questions about the Inspirational Awards Process? Contact

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