

A group of youth are playing soccer on a grassy field in front of a school building. The scene is captured in a wide shot, showing several players in motion. In the foreground, a purple soccer ball sits on the grass. In the background, a yellow and blue soccer ball is on the ground. The school building has a brick facade and a window with a blue frame. The overall atmosphere is active and positive.

# Leveraging Youth Sports to Support Positive Youth Development

February 19, 2025 | 2:00 PM



Alterschool Alliance

# Housekeeping Tips



- **Experiencing delays?** Try closing out of other programs running on your computer.



- **Have a question or comment?** Use the chat to interact with presenters and other participants.



- **This webinar is being live streamed and recorded** — we will share a link to the recording and all resources after the presentation.

# Speakers



**Dan Gilbert**

Director, Whole Child Initiatives  
Afterschool Alliance



**Jennifer Brown Lerner**

Deputy Director  
Aspen Institute Sports &  
Society Program



**Sean Brock, MODERATOR**

National Advisor II of Whole Child  
Health  
Alliance for a Healthier  
Generation



**Afterschool Alliance**

# Speakers



**Kristin Kelly**  
Program Director  
318 Foundation



**Kyra Lambert**  
Program Coordinator  
318 Foundation



**Lori Watkins**  
Coordinator of Recreation  
and Athletics  
Lakeshore Foundation

# Sports-Based Positive Youth Development

**When we keep young people active**, it has a profound impact on their well-being. Staying active helps young people have better mental and emotional health, better cognitive function, and higher levels of educational achievement than their peers.

Youth sports programs are perfectly situated not just for keeping our young people active and healthy but also for supporting the development of a diverse array of skills, behaviors, and beliefs that will help them thrive in school, work, and life.



# Youth Sports Program Spotlights

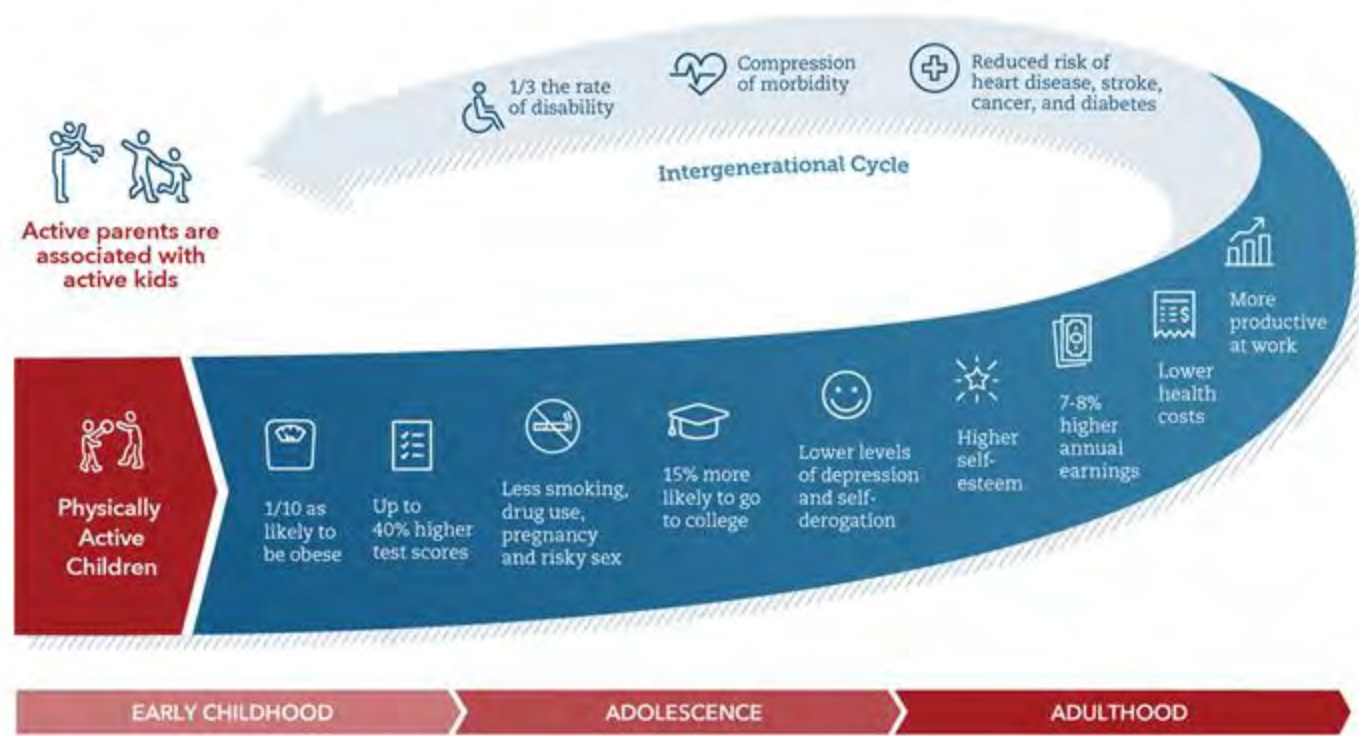
We are also excited to share with you all the **series of four program spotlights from our blog, the *Afterschool Snack***, which provide insights, perspectives, and promising practices from some amazing youth sports-focused afterschool programs that were kind enough to let us take up their time!

Two of the spotlights feature the Lakeshore Foundation and the 318 Foundation, from whom you will be hearing more momentarily!



# ACTIVE YOUTH DO BETTER IN LIFE

What Research Shows on the Lifetime Benefits



Learn more at [as.pn/sportsfacts](http://as.pn/sportsfacts)

# 8 PLAYS

## ASK KIDS WHAT THEY WANT

*Center the voice of youth in the design of youth sports*

## REINTRODUCE FREE PLAY

*Let kids play on their own terms and they will*

## ENCOURAGE SPORT SAMPLING

*Connect kids to a variety of the 120+ sports available*

## REVITALIZE IN-TOWN LEAGUES

*Opportunities that are local, affordable, quality*

## THINK SMALL

*Be creative when identifying sport spaces*

## DESIGN FOR DEVELOPMENT

*Age-appropriate play recognizes kids are not mini adults*

## TRAIN ALL COACHES

*The minimum ask: coaching philosophy for kids, basics in physical literacy and sport skills, and safety*









## EMPHASIZE PREVENTION

*Keep kids safe so they can grow up to be healthy and active*

# 8 Strategies for the 8 Key Sectors



# ALL CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT:

-  TO **PLAY SPORTS**
-  TO **SAFE AND HEALTHY** ENVIRONMENTS
-  TO **QUALIFIED** PROGRAM LEADERS
-  TO **DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE** PLAY
-  TO **SHARE** IN THE PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF ACTIVITIES
-  TO AN **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY** FOR PERSONAL GROWTH
-  TO BE TREATED WITH **DIGNITY**
-  TO **ENJOY** THEMSELVES

## SPORT FOR ALL, PLAY FOR LIFE MODEL

### BROAD ACCESS LEADS TO SUSTAINED PARTICIPATION

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*Squaring the pyramid creates athletes for life, at all levels.*

*Up to age 12, focus on ability, confidence, and desire to be active.*

**TOTAL POPULATION**



**MILLION  
COACHES  
CHALLENGE**

<https://www.millioncoaches.org/>

# 318

FOUNDATION

# SPORTS PROGRAM

Kristin Kelly, Program Director & Kyra Lambert, SPORTS Program Coordinator



# Leveraging Sports for Community Impact

## Champions Academy Model

- High school girls
- 1-week, no-cost, “training camp” experience
- Holistic approach with VISION leadership and mentorship program curriculum
- Athletes: drive, skill, & talent but need support around exposure and resources

## Health & Wellness

- Teaching healthy practices for athletes (Active recovery)
- Include mental and physical health education

## Education

- Daily Financial Literacy programming during summer Academy

## College Campus

- Partner with local university for summer Academy

## Coaches Clinic

- High school and middle school coaches

## Community Engagement

- Mini-clinics in the community



# Successes & Challenges: Lessons Learned

## SUCCESSSES

### Partnerships

- 16 high schools across northern and central Louisiana
- Coaches
- Professional
  - Women's Sports Foundation
  - Chase
  - Humana
- Colleges
- Athletes
  - 2024- 35 girls
  - 2025-40 girls



## CHALLENGES

- **Free model**
  - Depends on donations and funding
- **Timelines & Communication**
  - Window for athlete engagement
  - Adaptability
- **Recruitment**
  - Developing database
  - Criteria

# Improvements: Overcoming Obstacles & Achieving Wins

- **Efficient communication fosters engagement**
  - Multiple types of communication
  - Texting and texting apps
- **Increased interaction with partners and Champions across programming**
- **Meeting families and athletes where they are**
  - Removing barriers for participation
  - Reducing factors that cause girls to drop out of sports or engage in sports at a high level



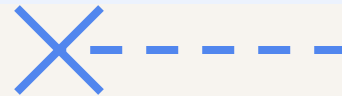
# Best Practices for Effective Programming

## Our Team

- A mix of former and current athletes, youth development professionals, and educators


## “In Between The Bounce”

- What are the Champions asking for and what is missing?
- Listening and connecting with parents and Champions beyond the Academy





# Stay Connected

 [programs@318foundation.org](mailto:programs@318foundation.org)

 [www.318foundation.org](http://www.318foundation.org)

Scan to Support & Stay in Touch!



**@318FOUNDATION**

Empowering Black girls and historically marginalized communities through mentorship, immersive experiences, and sports.

**318**  
FOUNDATION



# Lakeshore Foundation

Lori Watkins, M.Ed., CIFT  
Coordinator of Recreation and Athletics





# WE ARE LAKESHORE

**Our vision** is a world in which every person has the opportunity to achieve a healthy, active, independent life.

**Our mission** is to provide opportunity for individuals with a disability to live a healthy lifestyle through physical activity, research, advocacy and health promotion.



LAKESHORE

# Our Facility

- Fieldhouse
- 3 Hardwood Courts
- 200-meter Indoor Track
- Fitness Center
- Aquatics Center
- Group Exercise Studios
- Regions Climbing Wall
- Shooting Range
- Sports Science and Performance Center
- Research Lab
- Nutrition Lab
- Telesuites



# **Afterschool Programs for Youth**

Strategies and Best Practices

# After School Programs

## ➤ Recreational

- Fresh
- Mini Movers
- Splash N Dash
- Kid Power

## ➤ Aquatics

- Wet Tots
- Learn to Swim
- Advance Swim

## ➤ Athletics

- Basketball
- Power Soccer
- Track and Field
- Swim Team



# After School Programs

- **BEST PRACTICES**
  - Include siblings
  - Provide transportation – if possible
  - Tap into community partnerships
  - Collaborate with other programs
    - FUSION
  - Identify ways for every participant to be successful!

# Creating Inclusive Games

- Throw balls instead of kicking or batting
- Change the size, weight or texture of a ball
- Change the size of the playing field
- Decrease or eliminate games with time limits
- Decrease the number of players per team
- Incorporate scooter boards
- Avoid games that players get “out”
- Use pool noodles instead of objects like sticks or rackets
- Lower nets or baskets
- Enlarge targets or goals sizes
- Roll dice to score points
- Use Velcro or brightly colored balls or markings
- Use batting tee rather than pitching
- Use tape on floor for bases – avoid things a wheelchair can’t roll over



# Community Partners – Network!

- Alabama State Parks
- Freshwater Land Trust
- Adaptive Aquatics
- Jones Valley Teaching Farm
- Birmingham Crossplex
- Birmingham Skate Park – WC Motocross
- City sports leagues
- Bowling alleys
- Paintball venues
- Skating/Ice Rinks
- Local Schools:
  - Adapted sports demos
  - Inclusion weeks
  - Member's schools
  - PE for specific classes
- Universities: Samford/UAB/Faulkner
  - Volunteer base
  - Hands on for students
  - Interns
- Children's of Alabama
- United Ability
- The Bell Center
- PT, OT, EI clinics
- Medical transportation companies (Kid One)
- Organizations who serve similar populations
  - Children's Harbor
  - Exceptional Foundation
  - Special Equestrians

# NCHPAD

**National Center on Health Physical Activity and Disability**

**Resource:**

**Inclusive Games For Early Childhood Education**



# Learn More

Visit  
[lakeshore.org](https://lakeshore.org)

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# Panel Discussion

# Q & A



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# Thank you!