



Sports4Kids

Building Play

Building

Communities



Dear Friend of Sports4Kids,

It is my pleasure to introduce this 2007-08 Sports4Kids Annual Report: *Building Play, Building Communities*. The year was definitely one of building here at Sports4Kids. While the organization grew overall, we also worked hard at building our infrastructure in anticipation of our ambitious plan for national expansion: 27 cities, 650 schools and more than 250,000 kids by September, 2011!

Over the year, Sports4Kids grew in the Bay Area, serving 92 schools in Oakland, Berkeley, San Francisco and Silicon Valley. Our offices in Boston, Baltimore and Washington, D.C. also continued to grow, ultimately bringing us to a total of 131 schools and crossing the magic 50,000 kids served daily mark.

Emblematic of the building done internally, my role changed considerably this past year. We were lucky to bring on an interim executive director, Susan Rothstein, whose enthusiasm, attention to detail and management savvy contributed significantly to our ability to both weather and prepare for growth and change. Susan's presence also enabled me to focus more on the external world, laying the groundwork for expansion and building partnerships to support our growing technical assistance and advocacy efforts.

Near the end of the year we were happy to bring on David Rothenberg as the executive director. David had previously served as Nolo Press' CEO and CFO, bringing with him a wealth of understanding around building systems, supporting people and achieving great things. He has jumped in with both feet, embracing our mission, our strengths and our quirks. I feel extraordinarily lucky to have him as a partner in realizing our vision.

Building a movement – especially a movement for play – can be challenging. But it is also a remarkably hopeful and encouraging experience. You really cannot imagine how many people are willing to lend their time and effort to make it possible for kids to play. It is almost impossible to convey the grace and generosity and genuine kindness that people offer up almost every day to support and advance our work. The pages that follow are intended to provide some insight into our collective efforts. Perhaps more importantly, we hope to encourage you to play yourself and in the process, to be a part of the grace and generosity and genuine kindness that is always out there – always within our reach.

I invite you to join me in building a nation that values play for every child.

Have fun,

Jill Vialet
President/Founder

**“The loftier the building,
the deeper must the
foundation be laid.”**

Thomas Kempis

ca. 1380-1471

Priest, monk and writer

All too often, when you read or watch the news, you'll run across yet another sad story or statistic about the decline in physical activity and exercise or the rise in obesity and diabetes in our children. Over the past few years, the national dialogue on children's health and well-being has gained momentum, bringing to the forefront the need to develop positive solutions and look at ways to reach children with constructive, healthy strategies for their everyday lives.

With this renewed attention and our commitment, Sports4Kids has set an ambitious goal of enabling every child in America to play in a safe, inclusive environment every day.

Last year, Sports4Kids launched a comprehensive strategic planning process to answer two key questions: How well is Sports4Kids positioned for national growth? And what is the best growth strategy to achieve our long-term vision? With the help of outside expertise, we analyzed national trends in recess and physical education and conducted in-depth interviews of both Sports4Kids staff and principals across the country to determine the demand in the market for our services. The analysis concluded:

- **Recess offers an enormous and virtually untapped opportunity** to increase children's physical activity. Nearly all public school children have some recess every day.
- **Sports4Kids is the leading national organization** delivering a recess-focused program directly to schools.
- **Sports4Kids offers a solution to one of the primary detractors from the learning environment.** Principals who do not have Sports4Kids recognize that the negative environment on the playground spills over into the classroom, and they feel recess is a critical issue for which they have found no viable solution.
- **Principals are willing to pay for this solution.** This is a considerable statement about both their need for help and their belief in the power of play for children's well-being.
- **Sports4Kids is sustainable and well-positioned to scale up into new cities.** Our program is in demand by principals who are willing to pay nearly 50 percent of the cost of delivering the program.
- **Sports4Kids can expand its impact well beyond the schools served by our full-day program.** Given the need for recess support and our past success in delivering training to school personnel outside our schools, there is an opportunity to package and market training across the country.

In many ways, these results are unsurprising, reflecting the experience of our years on the pavement, grass, hardwood and rubber mats of America's schools. At the same time, however, they underscore the challenges and opportunities ahead of us.

Over the past year, Sports4Kids has created a four-year strategic plan to expand our unique brand of play to hundreds more schools through our full-day direct service program. In addition, we plan to reach thousands more schools and hundreds of thousands of children through our training and technical assistance services. Sports4Kids will leverage its unique programs and successful model to build a flagship organization, one that is operating exemplary school-based programs in a critical mass of cities. Our goal is to seed a national movement calling for play in every public school.

Chaos to Calm

When Sports4Kids debuted at Washington, D.C.'s Brookland Educational Campus, for the first time in years Principal Donna Pressley experienced an organized recess.

"It was almost a shock," she laughs. "We had been trying and trying to organize our recess, but it was always tough. Who would be responsible for getting equipment out? Who would be responsible for collecting it? Who would run games? Who would monitor the kids? There were a lot of issues, and not a lot of resources."

Then she found Sports4Kids.

"Sports4Kids came in and did everything they promised. Coach Brad began working with kids to teach them about games with rules, and about good sportsmanship and good conduct," she explains. "As the students learned to play games, they built up their confidence and began to be aware of all the things they do when working as a team."

"Recess has become popular again," says Pressley. "It translates wonderfully in the classroom, and has helped our overall school climate. Now, nobody wants to lose time playing so they make sure to cooperate and work hard. Our kids are happier, healthier and have a new level of self-esteem. It's a positive way to keep instruction going, and it works for everyone."

Building Play as a Cornerstone of the School Day

Play provides an unparalleled opportunity to foster the physical, social and emotional development of our kids. Since 1996, Sports4Kids has been engineering a powerful system of play that is making a daily difference where it is most needed. With energy and imagination, high fives and hula hoops, Sports4Kids builds play and physical activity into a positive school environment, offering opportunities throughout the entire day — beginning before the first bell rings and continuing until well after the last has silenced.

Because it takes place every school day on nearly every school yard in America, recess is an integral part of our program. Sports4Kids works exclusively with low-income schools, helping to build a healthy school culture, minimize inequities and take advantage of the amazing teaching and learning opportunities inherent in recess time. Armed with balls, cones, jump ropes and enthusiasm, our full-time site coordinators, or "coaches," take to the blacktop or hardwood every recess, bringing healthy, inclusive play that moves kids off the sidelines and engages them in the action. With hundreds of games in our [Sports4Kids Playbook](#), coaches get kids in the game and get them moving.





RECESS AS A FOUNDATION

Recess is an unsurpassed opportunity to teach children valuable life lessons. According to “Recess Rules,” a report on the state of play commissioned by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, recess offers nearly half of the opportunity available to promote physical activity among kids during the school year — more than P.E. programs and after-school programs. The report also revealed that schools with the highest enrollment of minority students and the lowest income levels were the schools most likely to have fewer minutes for recess or have recess cut altogether. The report highlights data that makes the case for investing time and funding into recess as an integral tool in supporting a healthy and inclusive school culture.

Confidence Through Leadership

Haydee Jimenez has seen first-hand how Sports4Kids makes a difference. Haydee works at Oakland's Manzanita Elementary, where her three children, including her oldest child, Sarah, attend school.

In fourth grade, Sarah told her mom she wanted to be a Sports4Kids junior coach, but she didn't think she'd be comfortable talking with the other kids and planning games and activities. Sports4Kids' Coach Max felt otherwise.

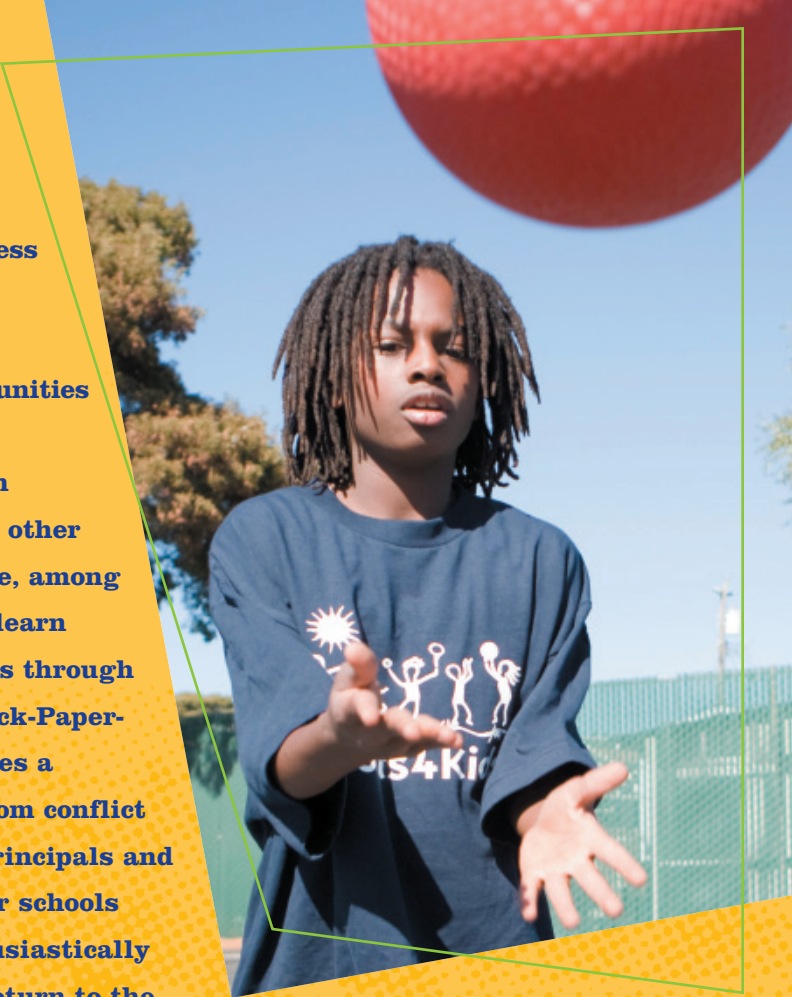
"Coach Max saw Sarah's leadership qualities and wanted to get her out of her shell," Haydee recalls. "Sarah finally decided to join the program."

That year, Sarah blossomed. Before becoming a junior coach, Sarah had just two or three friends. By the end of the school year, Sarah's circle had grown to include friends in every classroom. She also became more outgoing and gregarious. Haydee now laughs that she can't stop her daughter from talking.

"It is a miracle what the junior coach program does for a child," she smiles. "Sarah's confidence soared, and her school work improved. She's not afraid to give oral reports anymore. She has really opened up, and I truly don't believe she would have if it wasn't for Sports4Kids."

A well-functioning recess can foster supportive relationships among students, create opportunities for meaningful youth involvement, and teach conflict resolution and other life skills. For instance, among other skills, students learn how to resolve conflicts through the simple game of Rock-Paper-Scissors, which provides a seamless transition from conflict back to cooperation. Principals and teachers at our partner schools consistently and enthusiastically report that students return to the classroom engaged and ready to learn after a Sports4Kids-led recess.

We build play into leadership through the Sports4Kids Junior Coach program, which encourages teams of students to work together to learn games, fair play and positive conflict resolution techniques, and to teach these skills and lessons appropriately to their classmates. Last year, more than 1,500 students donned the distinctive Sports4Kids junior coach shirts and took an active role on the playground, using their training and leadership to make recess fun, safe and inclusive for all their classmates. For children who have not had the opportunity to lead, the junior coach program provides a positive and structured opportunity to explore their leadership skills and have a meaningful role in creating safe and healthy opportunities for play and physical activity at the school. These help build the foundation that young people need in order to begin to care for and feel responsible for their communities.





RECESS ROLL-OUT

Recess took on a new meaning in New Orleans and St. Louis this past year, when our high-energy Recess Roll-Out premiered at 15 schools in the two cities. We introduce our program to potential partner cities with a full week of Recess Roll-Out, which provide a vigorous demonstration of the potential our program has for improving school environments. Sports4Kids coaches provide on-site support and enthusiasm for a full week as students four-square, kickball and rock-paper-scissor their way around their blacktopped playgrounds, learning new games and enjoying healthy, inclusive play. As part of our aggressive plan to expand our programs to 27 cities in the next four years, Sports4Kids is bringing our full program to New Orleans and St. Louis for the 2008-09 school year.

Motivation through Games

For Shanna Lawson, a fifth grade teacher at Horace Mann Elementary in San Jose, California, Sports4Kids has brought a new dimension to teaching and learning. While her students look forward to their regular class game times with their Sports4Kids coach, Ms. Lawson has taken the **Sports4Kids Playbook** and program one step further — creating her own class game time as a motivation for class.

Every Friday afternoon, if her class has earned the privilege, they get an additional 30 minutes of games. Indoor or outdoor, depending on the weather, the class engages in their own brand of “funpetition,” working up a good sweat in the process.

“The kids are so motivated to get more play. With the additional class game time, they are active, creative and work together better. They work really hard for the privilege,” she explains. “Sports4Kids has given us a tremendous resource that is about more than just games. The fun and physical activities are an amazing incentive for the kids to settle down and focus on learning. And that makes it easier for me to help them learn and prepare for middle school.”

Between recess bells, Sports4Kids coaches establish a weekly schedule of class game time activities, providing an inclusive, consciously cooperative approach to introducing sports and physical activity to children. The goal is that students gain a positive experience with sports education and be inspired to learn new games and physical skills as they grow. In partnership with the teacher, our coaches deliver a structured, play-based curriculum based on youth development principles. Kids learn basic sports, playground and cooperative games, as well as lessons on physical health and fitness and principals of violence prevention and safety.

Sports4Kids builds empathy and teamwork in students through our interscholastic/developmental sports leagues, which teach them the skills of games like basketball, volleyball and soccer. In many cases, these leagues provide opportunities that students may not otherwise have. Through these leagues, players learn to play hard, navigate a set of challenges, and celebrate together. More importantly, they learn the value of teamwork, how to play with grace and confidence and how to support each other.

Sports4Kids builds play into the fabric of the community with our after-school programs, which bring kids together for a time each day to focus on learning and growing. Our after-school programs provide students with a solid combination of scholastic support, engaging physical activities and group projects within a consistent community.

At a developmental stage when kids begin to identify more closely with their peer group, it is important for students and parents alike to have a positive, inclusive after-school program diverse in activities and rich in character.



AMERICORPS MEMBERS AT SCHOOL

Chantha Toeum is an example of the type of coach that works as a Sports4Kids site coordinator through the AmeriCorps program. Chantha has volunteered in the community since middle school, giving his time to help out in soup kitchens and homeless shelters, pitching in at neighborhood clean-up events and helping out at hospitals. Service is simply part of Chantha's DNA.

Chantha joined Sports4Kids last year as a second-year AmeriCorps member, after serving in the program as a service scholar at Boston's Suffolk University.

"The AmeriCorps program and Sports4Kids allow me to enjoy community service in a truly fulfilling way. I see the change and growth in the kids every day at school. I can be outside and help students grow their skills, open up and become more confident," he says. "I help transform the playground so there's less conflict and arguing, and kids are better able to work and play together in a safe environment. The reward from this service is payment in itself."

Chantha has returned to Sports4Kids to serve a second year at Young Achievers in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts.



More than a Sport

As an administrator for Baltimore City Public Schools as well as a veteran seven-year principal at Medfield Heights Elementary there, Debbie Thomas has a deep appreciation for the role Sports4Kids plays after the last bell of the day.

“Sports4Kids can affect the whole child—from the social, emotional and physical to the academics and lessons on how to be good citizens and good people,” she says. “The after-school and league programs further support that. They help them understand the importance of relationships within a broader community. Sports4Kids’ out-of-school programs give structure to kids and give them something positive and productive to do.”

While Debbie appreciates watching kids work on skills like dribbling, passing, shooting and teamwork, she sees a much deeper value to the program.

“Sports4Kids’ after-school components extend and build on family and community,” she notes. “With the leagues, parents and kids from different parts of the city come together simply in the name of play. These leagues build relationships and understanding. Adults are together laughing, smiling, promoting positive energy for children and cheering on kids on both teams to do the right thing. It doesn’t matter which school or side of the city you are from, for an hour or so you are all on the same team, building community in support of kids. That’s really something special.”

Building into the Future

As Sports4Kids continues to promote our unique brand of play, we are embarking on an ambitious program to take our movement far beyond the schools we serve directly. Our Community Training Program forms the cornerstone of this initiative. Through this program, we are reaching additional organizations and providers who share our commitment to bringing safe and inclusive play and physical activity to America’s children. By training thousands of teachers, parents, and youth workers, who then reach hundreds of thousands of children on the playgrounds, we are giving them the tools to provide healthy opportunities for our nation’s youth. Through this community movement, we plan to serve more than 1 million children within the next five years.

Service to the Community

To build a movement for play, it is crucial to have the right people on the playground, and AmeriCorps has played a central role in this important effort. AmeriCorps engages thousands of Americans each year to help build and strengthen their communities through service. The far-reaching program is designed to offer a comprehensive experience for individuals who want professional training and work experience while serving their community at the same time.

Sports4Kids has enjoyed a strong partnership with AmeriCorps at the statewide level for the past five years, working with the program to place enthusiastic, trained adults as site coordinators in our schools to bring play to students. This year, Sports4Kids was awarded our first national direct service grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service, which administers AmeriCorps and other programs. While significant to expanding our capacity in several cities we currently serve, the award is even more instrumental in our ability to support our vision for play nationwide. Through our partnership with this organization, nearly all first year Sports4Kids coaches are also AmeriCorps members, making their mark on the world by serving children and communities that most need their commitment. It’s a natural fit, and one that will continue to build our vision into the future.



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ALL STARS HELPING KIDS

Every year since 2006, Sports4Kids has benefitted from the generous support of some of the most well-known athletes in professional sports. Last year, All Stars Helping Kids helped bring healthy and inclusive play to even more kids at low-income schools with their generous donation of \$100,000. Our partnership with All Stars has helped to introduce sports and physical activity to underserved schools and kids who may otherwise be overlooked. Here Sports4Kids' Jill Vialet accepts a check from All Stars (L-R) Marlon Evans, Marcus Allen and Ronnie Lott.



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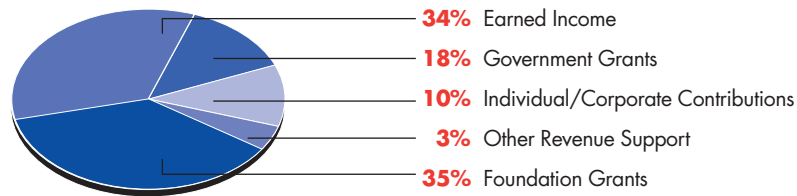
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2007-08 Sports4Kids Sources and Uses of Funds

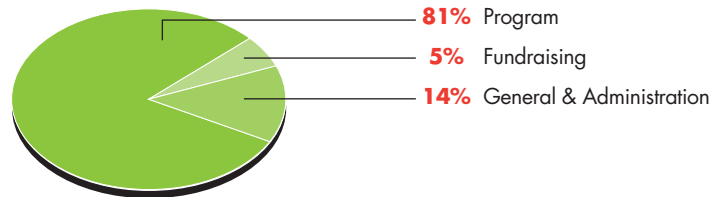
Sports4Kids relies on a diversified funding model for sustainability. Schools pay about one-third of the cost of the program, which ensures a sustainable base of funding for growth. The other two-thirds comes from a combination of private foundation, government, corporate and individual supporters.

Our vision is to provide safe, healthy and inclusive play to more than a million children within the next four years. This is an ambitious goal, but one we expect to reach by building on the success we've worked for over the past 12 years.

Sources of Funds*



Uses of Funds



*Note: Foundation Grants and Contributions includes unrestricted income recognized in the current fiscal year and does not reflect future payments on multi-year grants receivable.

Source: Audited Financial Statements



BUILDING PLAY AS A CHANGEMAKER

As the teachers and students on the playgrounds we've served for the past 12 years will attest, kickball and Rock-Paper-Scissors really can help build a better world. We weren't the only ones with that belief. Sports4Kids was chosen as one of three winners in the Sport for a Better World competition. Ashoka's Changemakers initiative co-sponsored the international competition with Nike, seeking to identify the most powerful ideas for using sport for social change. Sports4Kids was selected from 382 entries offered by individuals and organizations from around the world, including entries from as far away as Africa and Cambodia.

BUILDING HEALTHIER SCHOOLS...

How do teachers and principals see our impact?

98% credit Sports4Kids with increasing student participation in physical activity

92% report Sports4Kids has improved their ability to facilitate physical activity with their class

91% state that students are more likely to cooperate with others

87% report that bullying or name-calling during recess has decreased

85% say Sports4Kids improves the ability of their students to resolve conflicts

95% report that students are engaged in physical activities for most of recess

99% request that Sports4Kids return for another year



RESCUING RECESS NATIONWIDE

Sports4Kids partnered with Cartoon Network and other national organizations last fall in a nationwide initiative to safeguard and promote daily recess. The overriding goal was to log at least 1 million volunteer hours from adults looking to get involved on the playgrounds of their local schools. As the nation's leading authority on play, Sports4Kids created the Rescuing Recess training video to provide this national initiative with the proper tools to help volunteers assist in safe and meaningful play.

**Schools
List by
City**



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Oakland, CA 94607
510-893-4180 ph
510-893-4378 fax

www.sports4kids.org

Design:
www.kevinakers.com

Photography:
Tom Seawall

Sports4Kids is a 501c3 nonprofit organization. All donations are tax-deductible.

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Printed on recycled paper

Alameda, CA
Alameda, CA
Ruby Bridges
Washington

Baltimore, MD
Alexander Hamilton
Arlington
Belmont
Brehms Lane
Dr. Rayner Browne
Fort Worthington
Garrett Heights
Gilmor
Govans
Holabird
John Ruhrah
Medfield Heights
Moravia Park
Mount Royal
Patterson Park Public Charter
Samuel F.B. Morse
Sarah M. Roach
Wolfe Street Academy

Berkeley, CA
John Muir
Le Conte
Rosa Parks

Boston, MA
Everett
Gardner
Haley
Hennigan
Lee Acacemy Pilot School
McKay
Mission Hill
Ohrenberger
Otis
Orchard Gardens
Young Achievers

Emeryville, CA
Anna Yates

Fremont, CA
Seneca Center

Oakland, CA
Allendale
Ascend
Bella Vista
Bridges Academy/Melrose

Community United
Cox
Dolores Huerta
Edna Brewer
Emerson
Encompass
Esperanza
Franklin
Futures
Garfield
Global Families
Highland
Hoover
Horace Mann
Howard
International Community
Korematsu
La Escuelita
Lakeview
Lazear
Learning Without Limits
Lincoln
Manzanita
Manzanita Seed (K-4)
Markham
Maxwell Park
Oasis
Parker
Peralta
Piedmont Ave
Rise Academy
Rock LaFleche
Rudsdale
Think College Now
Urban Promise Academy
Webster
Woodland
World & Achieve(Hawthorne)
Westlake

Redwood City, CA
Adelante
Garfield
Hoover

San Francisco, CA
Buena Vista
Cesar Chavez
Charles Drew
Cleveland
El Dorado
ER Taylor
Fairmount
George Peabody

Guadalupe
Hillcrest
Longfellow
Malcolm X
Monroe
Paul Revere
Redding
Sanchez
Sherman
Tenderloin

San Jose, CA
Dorsa
Franklin
Goss
Horace Mann
Hubbard
Lowell
Merritt/Trace
Slonaker
Willow Glen

San Leandro, CA
Seneca Center

Vallejo, CA
Widenmann (Vallejo)

Washington, D.C.
ABC Public Charter School
Brent
Bunker Hill
Brookland
Clark
Community Academy PCS:
Amos Campus
Community Academy PCS:
Rand Campus
Miner
Montgomery

West Contra Costa, CA
Bayview
Coronado
Dover
Fairmont
Grant
Helms Middle School
Highland
King
Lincoln
Peres
Stege
Verde

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