



Think Detroit PAL
Annual Report 2009



Dear Friends,

It is without question that 2009 was one of the toughest years in the history of Think Detroit PAL, as an economic downturn crippled both our region and the nation. Like everyone else, Think Detroit PAL suffered through the effects of what has been termed, "The Great Recession." However, we feel confident we have survived the roughest part of the storm and have emerged as a more disciplined and effective organization.

Consider these facts about the organization's work in 2009:

- ▶ Think Detroit PAL provided nearly 12,000 children with opportunities to participate in athletic, academic and leadership programs.
- ▶ We developed several new character-building programs including a Youth Advisory Council, the first ever lacrosse camp offered in the city of Detroit, and a Cheer Jamboree, which brought together hundreds of Detroit cheerleaders.
- ▶ Our track and field program celebrated its tenth anniversary by sending a record-setting 89 participants to the AAU National Track and Field Championships in Des Moines, Iowa.
- ▶ More than 1,500 volunteers devoted more than 200,000 hours on and off the field to serve as mentors to our children.
- ▶ Our three-level IMPACT coach training and certification program was featured at two state and regional conferences.

▶ In collaboration with the Detroit Tigers Foundation, we completed a \$125 thousand renovation of the Magglio Ordonez Field at St. Hedwig Park in southwest Detroit.

▶ We collaborated with the Detroit Lions' Martin Mayhew to host the first annual Youth Football Coaching Academy for more than 70 football coaches representing each of our football organizations.

Also in 2009, our incredible fund development team, which raises 85 percent of our budget each year, produced yet another hugely successful Paul W. Smith Golf Classic and held the first annual MVP Award event which honored Mayor Dave Bing.

We would like to thank Think Detroit PAL's staff, volunteers, board members and donors; all of whom helped the organization flourish in 2009. Your support and hard work has changed kids' lives. You have kept kids out of trouble by giving them constructive activities where those activities otherwise don't exist. You have kept kids in school and helped them graduate. You have served as role models and mentors for thousands of kids every year. In short, your support and hard work makes Detroit a great place to be a kid and raise a family.

With warm regards and best wishes for continued success,

Daniel S. Varner
Chief Executive Officer

Joyce L. Suber
Board Chair

Who is Think Detroit PAL?

Think Detroit PAL is a non-profit organization **positively impacting the lives of nearly 12,000 children each year** through athletic, academic and leadership development programs. Formed through a merger of Think Detroit and the Detroit Police Athletic League in 2006, Think Detroit PAL has roots dating back to 1970.

Think Detroit PAL empowers the community by training volunteer coaches and by creating safe places for kids to play. Each year, Think Detroit PAL teaches more than 1,400 caring community members how to be encouraging and effective mentors. Think Detroit PAL has also renovated numerous parks and recreation centers across the city including Maheras-Gentry Park and St. Hedwig Park, transforming them into some of the city's premier athletic facilities.

Programs

Think Detroit PAL's largest programmatic focus is youth sport leagues. The organization runs traditional recreation programming in a variety of sports including **baseball, softball, track & field, soccer, football, cheerleading, basketball and a volleyball league exclusively for girls.**

In addition to its extensive recreational sport leagues, **Think Detroit PAL also fields several travel teams throughout the year in five sports.** Think Detroit PAL's travel teams are made up of the strongest on-field leaders. These players and others also participate in the academic and leadership development programming of the D. Duane Hurtt Student Athlete Resource Center.

IMPACT Coaches Training

In 2007 Think Detroit PAL launched its own coach-training curriculum, IMPACT Coaches Training, which is designed to give volunteer coaches the tools they need to turn the common youth sport experience into a great youth development experience. Designed in conjunction with Michigan State University's Institute for the Study of Youth Sports, coaches are taught Think Detroit PAL's youth development philosophy and how to use youth sports as a vehicle to build character.



About Us



Everyday the people of Think Detroit PAL strive to instill core values in Detroit's children. Our coaches and volunteers are taught how to use sports as a vehicle for building character. **Values like discipline, leadership, respect and responsibility are hard won by Think Detroit PAL kids on fields of play across the city.**

We would not be able to produce these countless character building opportunities if the employees, volunteers and donors of Think Detroit PAL did not practice what they preach. Namely, Think Detroit PAL embodies the value of teamwork.

Think Detroit PAL is a team. We are made up of about 20 dedicated employees, more than 1,400 passionate volunteers and thousands of caring individual and corporate donors. Together we create, manage and fund a multitude of athletic, academic and leadership programs for Detroit's children.

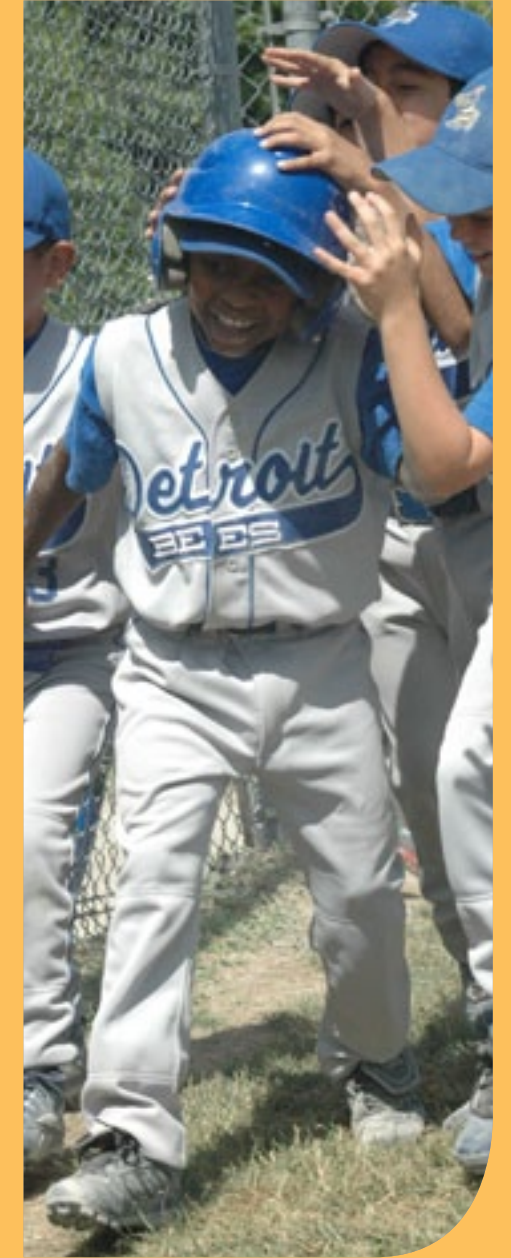
To make these programs happen, the people of Think Detroit PAL must work together everyday to overcome the obstacles inherent in providing safe and enriching programs for children in Detroit. Consider this; Think Detroit PAL's field maintenance crew consists of three men and a truck.

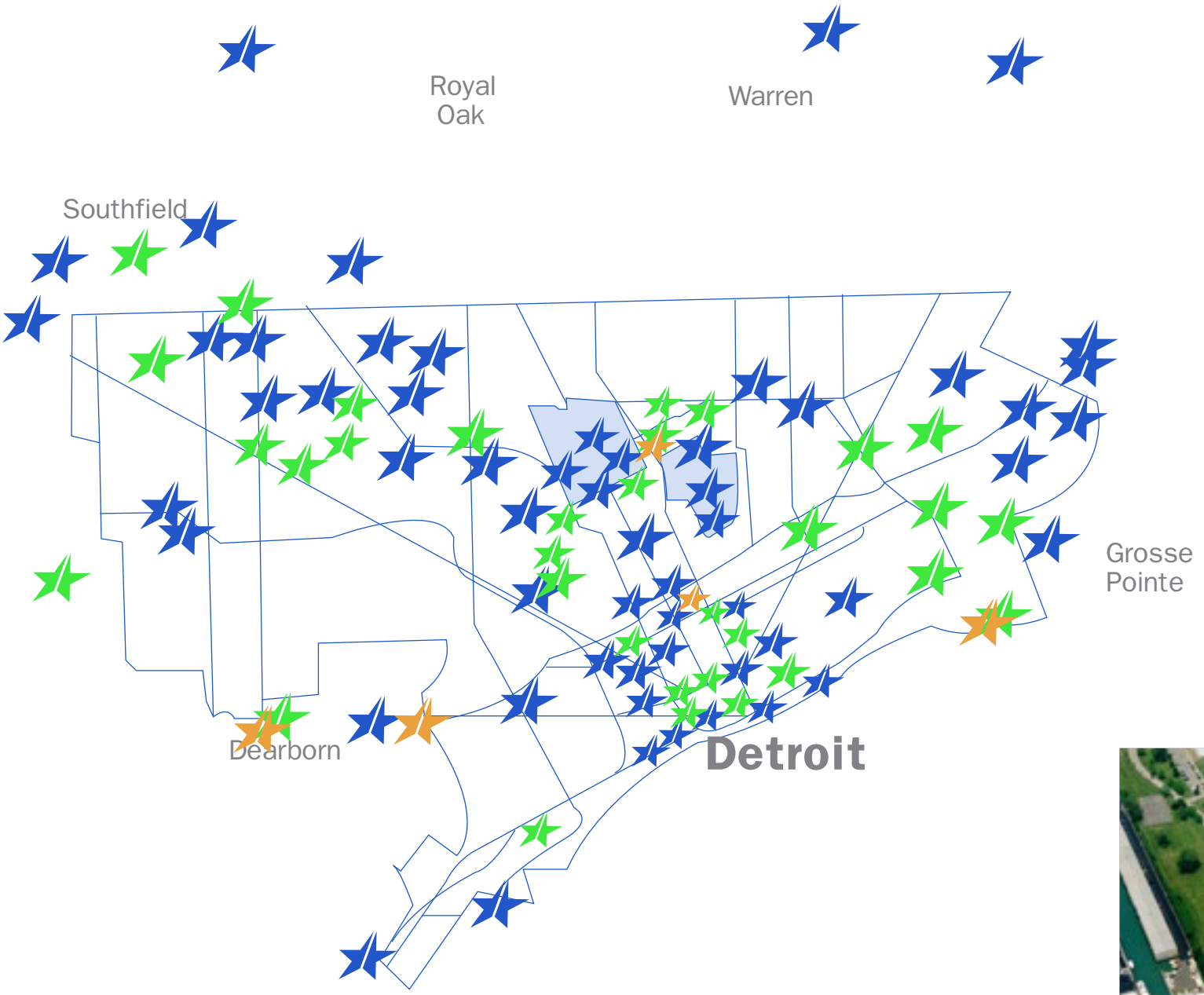
In the summer, this team travels across the city each morning to prepare up to 18 fields for use by Think Detroit PAL's nearly 80 baseball and softball teams. Major League teams can have up to six times that many people to work on just one field! That is just one example of how Think Detroit PAL puts the value of teamwork into practice.

Think Detroit PAL also teams up with others. In 2009, Think Detroit PAL partnered with the Detroit Tigers Foundation and Magglio Ordonez to renovate two baseball fields at **St. Hedwig Park in Southwest Detroit. Together we cleaned up the park and invested \$125 thousand in updates to the diamonds including new fencing, dugouts and bleachers.**

To maintain this premier baseball facility, Think Detroit PAL partnered with the St. Hedwig Coalition, a citizen's group in the neighborhood which cares for the fields. Partnerships, like the ones built around St. Hedwig Park, are essential to creating the infrastructure needed to instill the values of discipline, leadership, respect, responsibility and, of course, teamwork in the children of Detroit.

Teamwork





★ Community Development:
Examples of Think Detroit PAL facility improvement projects include:

\$1 Million renovation of five baseball and softball diamonds at Maheras Gentry Park.

Renovation of two baseball diamonds at St. Hedwig Park to create a premier baseball facility for use by TDP teams and other community leagues.

\$20,000 in field improvements to 11 baseball and softball diamonds at Jayne Park.

★ Community Partnerships:
 Facilities maintained by Think Detroit PAL, such as Historic Ft. Wayne and Peterson Playground, as well as other host sites for Think Detroit PAL leagues.

★ Community Engagement:
 Detroit Public Schools, charter schools, churches, youth centers and other community organizations with Think Detroit PAL athletic teams.

The Facts:
 In 2009...Think Detroit PAL and the Detroit Tigers Foundation completed renovation of the Magglio Ordonez Field at St. Hedwig Park in southwest Detroit. Think Detroit PAL managed the project which improved two softball diamonds and completely transformed an existing baseball diamond into a premier baseball facility.



Building Communities

Respect



Coach Bobbi was like so many others before her, a loving parent looking for a positive program to help engage and encourage her seven year old daughter. That's how Bobbi came to be a coach for Think Detroit PAL's West Side Cubs D-Team cheerleaders.

Bobbi always valued respect; but earning, maintaining and giving respect as an individual can be a full-time job in itself. Introducing the value and teaching it to a group of young girls is a monumental task. Thankfully, Bobbi was up to the challenge.

"It's about treating people the way that you would like to be treated," said Bobbi. "We try to teach the girls on the team to be considerate of others. This will help eliminate conflicts amongst team members, classmates as well as siblings."

She firmly believes that as a role model, you have to do more than talk about respect. **You have to lead by example.** Giving respect is the first step to teaching it.

"I always make sure I speak to my team in a courteous and respectful way," said Bobbi. "We talk about things such as what is expected of them as a cheerleader as well as what's expected of them as a person. They have to know what it looks like before they can imitate it."

Bobbi makes sure her athletes are treated with respect even when they are disrupting the team by being late or unruly. Instead of yelling at the child, she praises the girls who are demonstrating the proper behavior. Bobbi knows that children are hungry for praise and that those who are disruptive will quickly change their behavior if given the chance for positive reinforcement.

"You can't expect kids to show respect if they've never experienced it," said Bobbi.

Coach Bobbi also knows what can become of a child who hasn't been taught this valuable lesson.

"It's more than just teaching a cheer routine," said Bobbi. "You are also teaching life skills. Growing up, I can think a few friends who weren't respectful when we were younger. Some of them have had difficulty getting a job or keeping employment. Being respectful of your job and the work that you do will definitely help you in your adult life."

Thanks to Coach Bobbi, the girls on her team will be well prepared for life's challenges as they grow up to be teachers, doctors and coaches for the next generation of Cubs.





Why Volunteer

Athletic participation in programs like those offered by Think Detroit PAL provide a multitude of proven benefits that promote a child's well being. **Compared to doing nothing at all, having an effective out-of-school activity results in 27% more youth with better grades and 37% more youth with higher achievement test scores!**

Think Detroit PAL provides more than **3,000 urban girls with an opportunity to gain self-confidence and develop leadership skills** though participation in organized sports each year.

Think Detroit PAL partners with the Skillman Foundation's Good Neighborhood Initiative to increase participation in extra-curricular programming among children in high-risk neighborhoods.

Be A Volunteer

As a volunteer with Think Detroit PAL you can make a tangible difference in the lives of Detroit's youth. Our volunteer coaches use sports as an opportunity to create character building opportunities on and off the field.

All Think Detroit PAL volunteers who work with our kids must pass a background check and complete our IMPACT training program which gives caring community members the tools needed to be great mentors. Our volunteers amass more than 200,000 hours of working directly with children each year! That is a lot of time spent keeping Detroit kids on the right path.

If you are interested in positively impacting your community by volunteering with Think Detroit PAL, please call our office at (313) 833-1600

The Facts:

In 2009...the Detroit Lions' Martin Mayhew hosted the first annual Youth Football Coaching Academy for our football coaches.

Our more than 1,400 volunteers devoted more than 200,000 hours on and off the field to serve as mentors to our children.



Volunteer



Victor is one of 135 Detroit kids who participate in Think Detroit PAL's track and field program each year. Growing up, his mother developed a drug habit which made it hard to establish a good home for Victor. He was in and out of foster homes, struggling to find his way, when he joined Think Detroit PAL. **Victor immediately embraced the lessons his coaches at TDP instilled in him.**

One of those lessons was discipline. At Think Detroit PAL, kids are taught that discipline is the power to control and reject unnecessary or harmful impulses. It's the ability to make a decision on a goal and follow that decision with perseverance until a level of success is reached.

"My coaches always say that I have to be strong mentally as well as physically," said Victor. "You can have all the talent in the world, but if you don't know how to apply it, you won't reach your full potential."

Victor uses his early life experiences and the tools he has gained from Think Detroit PAL to keep himself focused on his future. He knows that developing bad habits can lead to drug use and crimes to support an addiction.

Discipline

"I think the way that I grew up made me focus on goals," said Victor. "It kept me disciplined because I know what can happen to you if you just give in to negative temptations."

Pete, one of Victor's friends and a talented young basketball player was just one example of a child who succumbed to the negative influences in his community. Like many children with nothing to do after school and no one to care about their activities, Pete joined a street gang. He was killed in a gang dispute as a teenager. **Victor is still moved by the memory of the day he lost his friend. This painful experience motivates Victor to remain focused and to put his talent to good use even when that road is rough.**

That's what makes Victor so special. He appreciates what he has and those around him. He appreciate the work that goes into achieving his goals. He has discipline beyond his years and is motivated to use it.



Leadership



On any given summer day you can find Myles at the park with two of his best friends; a glove and a bat. As far back as he can remember he has been on the diamond practicing his skills, rain or shine, with teammates or by himself. He believes that's what it takes to become good at his craft and to be a good leader.

Myles is a member of Think Detroit PAL's highly competitive Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) baseball team. **He defines leadership as a consistent effort to motivate and support one's teammates on and off the field.**

Myles' leadership qualities began to emerge when he was younger and playing for a different youth baseball organization.

"My old coach was always yelling at us for every little thing," said Myles. "We were only in the third grade but he acted like we were in the pros! I would just tell everybody not to worry about the coach and just keep trying their best".

Myles' Think Detroit PAL coaches have recognized and nurtured his leadership qualities so that he feels comfortable taking a leadership role on his elite team.

For instance, when Myles hears his teammates talking about the undeveloped skills of new players he likes to remind the team that last year they were beaten badly by a Chicago team twice in a tournament.

"All of us are learning how to get better," said Myles. "I tell them, 'The kids on that Chicago team could all hit better than us so we shouldn't be talking about each other. Let's stay positive because talking about your teammates won't make the team better.'"

Besides always being constructive and optimistic, Myles is a good leader because he has his priorities straight. He lists having fun, along with being with friends and liking his coach as the main reasons he likes playing baseball. Of course he ranks winning near the top, just like any other kid, but he admits **you don't always have to win to have a positive experience.**

"We didn't win a game when we went to that Chicago tournament," said Myles. "We lost every game bad, but it was really fun and we had the best time ever. We played our best and that's all we could do. I want to go back and play again!"

Spoken like a true leader.

Building character and forging leaders

After the sudden passing of D. Duane Hurtt, Think Detroit PAL's first chief operating officer in 2007, the organization dedicated the D. Duane Hurtt Student Athlete Resource Center (SARC). SARC programming focuses on building leaders on and off the field.

Travel Teams

Athletes with advanced skills in baseball, softball, track and field, soccer and volleyball may be selected for a position on TDP Elite travel teams. These athletes compete across the nation against the best athletes at their age level. **By participating in tournament play, children have the chance to make new friends, travel the country and gain valuable learning experiences.**

Academic and Leadership training

Think Detroit PAL encourages leadership and academic development with summer day camps college campus visits we also offer one-on-one counseling sessions to prepare student athletes for college by helping them navigate the recruiting and admissions process.

Camps and Clinics

Think Detroit PAL offers camps and clinics throughout the year for children to improve their leadership skills and athletic abilities. Boys and girls may participate in camps focused on teaching advanced techniques, game strategy and team leadership in several sports.

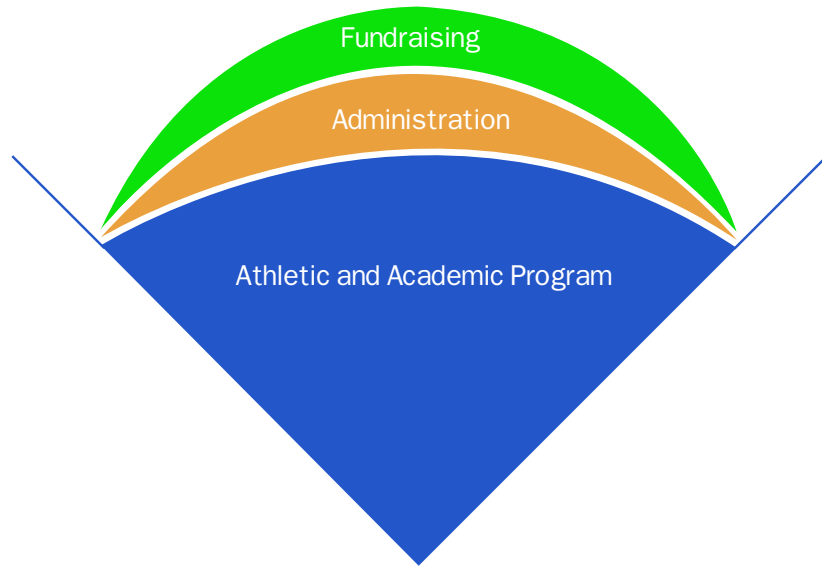
The Facts:

In 2009...Mark Brown, a ten-year veteran of the Think Detroit PAL baseball program and a star of our RBI travel team, signed a full-ride scholarship with the University of Kansas. He is the first student from Detroit Public Schools in the last 25 years to earn a scholarship to a Division I school for baseball.

In 2009...our D. Duane Hurtt Student-Athlete Resource Center hosted nationally-renown speaker, Jeff Janssen, who conducted a leadership workshop for TDP high school student-athletes.



D. Duane Hurtt SARC



Where Your Donation Goes

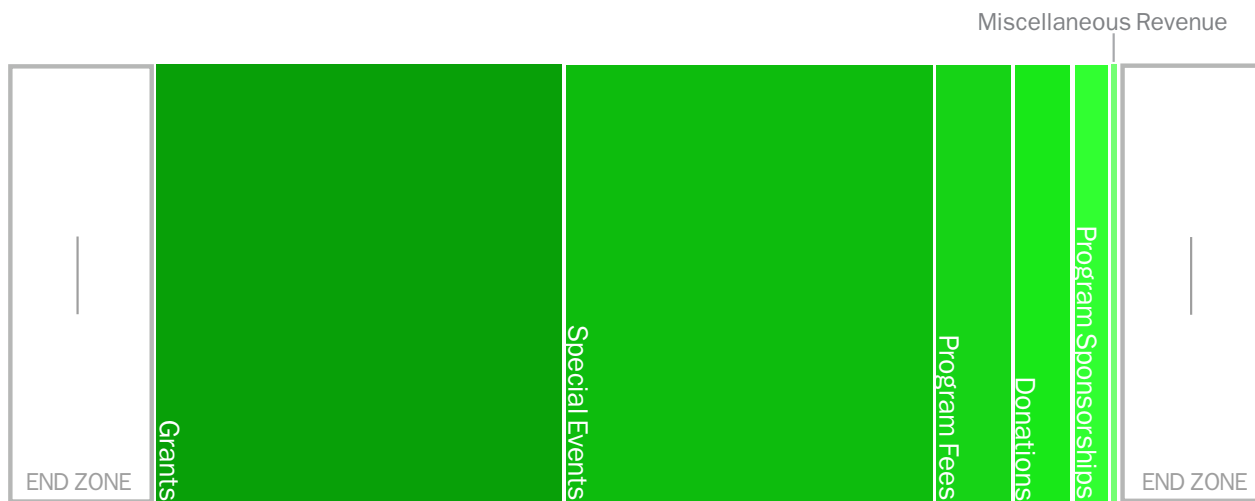
At Think Detroit PAL, we know our donors are all about the kids. **That's why we make sure the highest percentage possible of every donated dollar goes towards our athletic and academic programs.** Whether a donation comes from an individual, a corporate partner or a foundation, we value every dollar that is contributed to help make Detroit a great place to be a kid and raise a family.

Currently 78 cents of every dollar donated to Think Detroit PAL goes directly to program services!



Supporting Think Detroit PAL

The majority of donations to Think Detroit PAL come from proactive individuals who care deeply about the future of Detroit's children. In addition, Think Detroit PAL benefits greatly from its corporate partners and supporting foundations.



Financial Information

Responsibility

Help. That's what little six year old Charles needed. He needed a little help tying his shoes, brushing his teeth and putting on his school clothes for the day. That's where big sister, Asia, a Think Detroit PAL basketball player, came in while mom got breakfast ready.

Ever since her early days at the local recreation center, Asia has shown a great deal of responsibility.

"I've been the captain on many of the teams that I've played on, so the girls on the team kind of look up to me," said Asia.

Being a responsible leader on those teams requires her to perform several duties. Without hesitation **she leads in team drills and gives advice and encouragement to teammates.** At game time, she serves as the players' representative during the pre-game discussion with referees.

"Asia is always the first one to finish each practice drill even though she's one of the youngest and smallest players," said Raina Harmon, one of Asia's coaches. "She's always stepping up even when the game gets rough."

One game that left a lasting memory had the team down by two points in the school league semi-finals. They had let an eight point lead slip away and frustration was setting in. Asia wasn't happy with a call by the referee. By the look on her face she was ready to explode.

"I knew I couldn't get mad because the rest of the team might do the same thing," said Asia. "If they did that, we would get technical fouls called on us and maybe lose the game."

She knew in order to have a chance at winning, everyone had to remain calm and follow her lead and the coach's instructions. The final score resulted in Asia's team pulling off a 20 point victory.

"Everyone depended on each other and everyone carried out their responsibilities," she said proudly!

One summer, Asia's team traveled out of state to play in a tournament. After the first day of games was complete everyone was back at the hotel and coach Raina was assigning laundry duty to the girls. She didn't know Asia had already collected the dirty uniforms and had begun washing them without being asked.

"She's the type of person that thinks long term," said her mom. "Our last game that day was pretty late and we were scheduled for an early one the next morning. Asia was already preparing for the next day because she knew we'd be pressed for time. That's the type of person she is. Always thinking ahead and giving a little help."







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