



PLAY CAPTAINS

SUMMER 2021

REPORT



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Introduction

Coined after the Block Captain and Jr. Block Captain roles, the Play Captain Initiative is a workforce development and civic-engagement initiative with the mission to empower and train teens in leadership, playful learning and facilitation to make the Play Streets, playgrounds and neighborhoods of Philadelphia more playful.



Play Captains and Playstreets: What's the difference?

Playstreets, a project of Parks & Recreation

Each summer, there are upwards of 500 Playstreets in Philadelphia, which, at its core is a free Summer Meal Program, overseen by Parks & Recreation. They serve as a safe place for children to receive two free meals a day during the summer.

- The Playstreets are closed off to cars between 10am-4pm.
- A resident on the block applies to be a Playstreet Supervisor and 70% of residents on the block needs to sign on their approval for the Playstreet.
- Not all the Playstreets are as 'playful' as they could be.



Play Captains and Playstreets: What's the difference?

Play Captains, a project of Fab Youth Philly

- Pays teens above minimum wage at \$9.00. Senior Play Captains (teens with us for two or more years and 18 y/o) can earn \$10.00
- Adult staff (Group Leaders) start at \$15 hour, and supervisors start at \$20;
- Play Captains work in teams of 5, supported by an adult called a Group Leader; and Group Leaders are supported by an adult Supervisor;
- We prioritize hiring teens that live in the neighborhoods they will be working;
- Teens receive a minimum of 30 hours of pre-employment training.
- Adults receive appx. 60-80 hours of pre-employment training.
- A home base (office space) in every neighborhood within .25 miles walking to/from the Playstreets. This is used for the pre-employment training, and for day-to-day meetings, shelter, cooling-off, storage, etc.
- A minimum of two teams (10 teens) are required to run the Initiative.
- Set schedule on the Playstreets, Monday-Thursday (on Friday the teens work ½ day and attend professional development);
- Teams work on clusters of Playstreets 3-4 per .25 miles within a specific neighborhood so teens can rotate throughout the day, spending approximately 45 min per Playstreet;
- Teens and adults wear uniforms/t-shirts to make them identifiable in the neighborhood.
- Data is collected on the Playstreets every day!

While there are lots of ways to measure success this summer at the core, for us that meant:

- NO cases of Covid-19
- NO trips to the hospital, or worse;
- NO ONE got shot (we were honestly most worried about this one).

We had **31 teens working in 4 different neighborhoods**, two of which were new neighborhoods for us.

And we added Play Captain programming at **three playgrounds** in two of those neighborhoods.

Check out more of our "Summer by the numbers" on the following pages, too.

SUMMER BY THE NUMBERS

5
Number of weeks on
the Playstreets



20
Number of days on
the Playstreets



11
Number of Playstreets



20
Hours of
pre-employment training

1 Visits from local college basketball Teams! (Thank you Temple Women's Basketball!)



3 Articles written about the work



13 Caring & supportive staff



1 Handwritten 'thank you' note from a parent

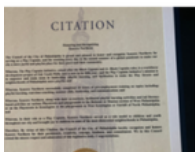
3 Additional programmatic partners



31 Rock star, stick-to-it Play Captains



11 FAB Street Supervisors



100+ Copies of Yaya Plans A Block Party given out

1 Citations from the City

3
Number of
Playgrounds



4
Number of
neighborhoods



300
Total hours of FREE
programming provided



Weekly Themes: Get to Know
You, Superheroes,
STEM/Olympics, Carnival &
Block Party

13,000
Average daily steps walked to and
from the Playstreets



1000
Water balloons tossed



1000+
Books given out



200
Art bags distributed

And the winner is...



We are so proud to share that Fab Youth Philly's Play Captain Initiative has been selected as one of two national finalists for the National Summer Learning Association Excellence in Summer Learning Award. Fab Youth Philly will formally accept this award in November at the national conference.

Each year, the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) recognizes the outstanding work done during the summer months on behalf of our nation's youth. Candidates for the Summer Learning Awards are exceptional summer programs, models, and systems that keep children and youth learning, safe and healthy during the critical summer months. They show strong outcomes in helping students cement the skills they have learned during the academic school year through creative curricula, unique programming, and effective family engagement strategies.

Each award-winning program receives:

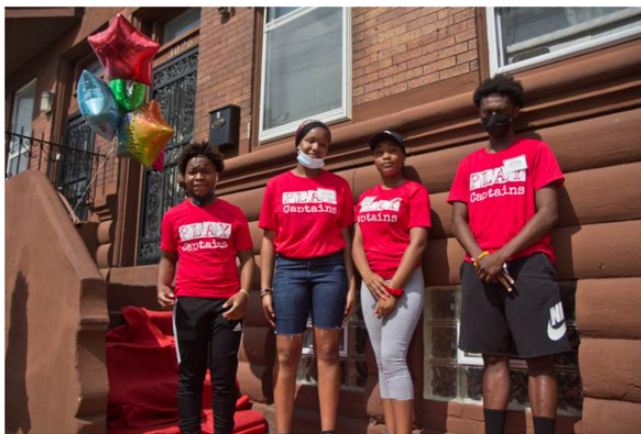
- A **\$10,000 donation**, supported by the New York Life Foundation;
- **National recognition** at NSLA's Summer Changes Everything™ annual conference;
- An **official award seal** for use on their website and in program publications;
- **Connection to a network** of award-winning leaders in the field and NSLA's professional development opportunities; and
- **Visibility through national and local media outreach**, along with acknowledgment from their local elected officials.

In the news!

The Play Captains were all over the news this summer.

For the last three years, we've kicked off the teens first day of employment with a "Red Carpet Roll Out" where we literally roll out a red carpet and invite residents, funders, supporters, partners, family, etc. to come out and cheer them on as they enter work. We had AMAZING turn out this summer, **nearly 50 people across 4 locations** and one of the at-large Council members came out (more on that later). Even Temple Women's basketball team came out! [Check out a brief video of the event.](#)

[Here is the WHYY article](#) written about the event and you can [watch a brief video](#) of the event, if you'd like too.



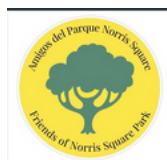
Playstreets captains (from left) Jah'sier Brickett, 15, Taylor Elliot, 16, Makalah Hanible, 15, and Semaj McFadden, 16, were given the red carpet treatment and community support on their first day of work, July 12, 2021. (Kimberly Paynter/WHYY)



This summer, we expanded our program into three playgrounds with a **grant from the William Penn Foundation**. On the first day, a photographer for the Inquirer was in the area and saw them playing and contacted me and came the next day and took some photos. There was an online and a print version of the images. [You can see that here.](#)

Partnerships are critical to our success

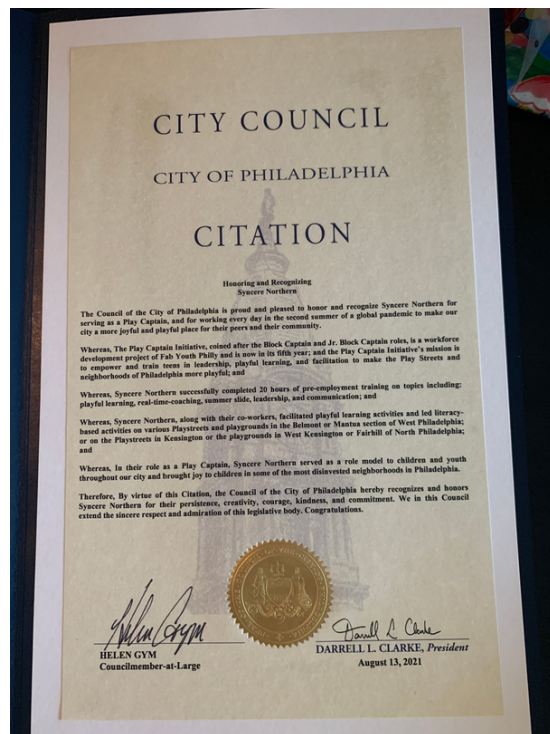
This summer, we partnered with Afterschool Activities Partnership (ASAP), Tree House Books, F.A.T.O.E art bus, Pennsylvania Handball Association, My Yoga with Marty, Coaches Who Care, & The Sierra Show to bring some additional training, programming & resources to the Playstreets & playgrounds. Innovative Solutions Collective, Dornsife Center for Neighborhood Partnerships, New Church Down the Way and West Kensington Ministries provided home-bases for us. Art-Love Charity donated 200 art bags, Book Smiles and Reading Recycled **donated over 1000 books** combined, which were distributed and also placed in neighborhood 'mini free libraries.' Mighty Writers gave us **100 Mighty Activity books** to distribute. Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha (APM), Friends of Rainbow de Colores Playground and also Friends of Norris Square Park worked with us to bring programming to area playgrounds. And the residents of Mantua, in West Philly supported another summer of Play Captain programming at the park at 37th & Mt. Vernon Streets.



Citations from the City

Councilwoman Helen Gym provided Citations for each Play Captain on behalf of the city.

The teens were SO proud to receive this honor.
Councilwoman Gym attended the Red Carpet Roll out & also joined the Play Captains out on the Playstreets in West Philly.



Did you know there is a children's book about the Play Captains?



In July of 2021, Fab Youth Philly published a children's book (the first in a series!) about the Play Captain Initiative. Check out the [review in the Inquirer](#) by Helen Ubiñas. You can purchase a copy for just \$10 [right here](#). Proceeds go towards our youth programs

The book was written by Rebecca Fabiano and is illustrated by local Philly artist, Briana Clarke who was also a Play Captain Supervisor and Trainer, and the protagonist, "Yaya" is based on a real Play Captain!

★★★★★ **It's like a How To for play captains anywhere!**

Reviewed in the United States on July 28, 2021

Verified Purchase

Yaya Plans a Block Party represents some of the best things about Philadelphia's young people. They are creative and engaging, they solve problems and they are role models for younger children. Ms. Fabiano tells the story and includes examples so that anyone can re-create a block party in their own neighborhood. Games included! Ms. Clarke brings the story to life through her beautiful illustrations.

★★★★★ **nostalgia-Play safe, play hard.**

Reviewed in the United States on July 28, 2021

Verified Purchase

This is the perfect book to demonstrate how important play still is. In a time where technology has consumed even the youngest of minds, play is still out there just waiting for people to come enjoy. This book brought back so many fond memories of how much fun it was to play and make up games. YAYA and her friends woke up the youth in me. I'm ready for a block party! At the end of this book, there are even games identified with the instructions in the back of the book. You can start to play today!

★★★★★ **Would have loved Yaya's job when I was her age!**

Reviewed in the United States on August 3, 2021

Verified Purchase

Being a native Philadelphian and growing up in North Philadelphia this book had extra special meaning for me. That aside, I thought this was a great read to teach kids about creativity, leadership, team building, and community support. The illustrations fit perfectly with the story. I will definitely be gifting this book to young readers.

★★★★★ **Fabulous window**

Reviewed in the United States on July 24, 2021

Verified Purchase

I read a review of this book in The Philadelphia Inquirer and ordered two copies for my Little Free Library in Bryn Mawr (Phila. suburb). What a terrific way to introduce suburban children to a wonderful part of city life. Children will love learning about new games and getting a sense of different city neighborhoods. The story is told in a straightforward way accessible to a broad range of ages.

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