



WWW.PLAYCAPTAINS.COM

PLAY CAPTAINS

OPEN LETTER TO
PHILADELPHIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

AN INNOVATION OF FAB YOUTH PHILLY

ABOUT THE PLAY CAPTAINS

The Play Captain Initiative (PCI): Founded in 2017, The Play Captain Initiative (www.playcaptains.com) is an innovation of Fab Youth Philly (www.fabyouthphilly.com).

Coined after the Block Captain and Jr. Block Captain roles, the Play Captains 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 and neighborhoods of Philadelphia more playful.

Who we are: A Play Captain is a teen that has been hired and trained by Fab Youth Philly to play with children on the Play Streets throughout Philadelphia during the summer (July through August).

What we do: Play Captains walk from Play Street to Play Street during the summer in groups of 3-5, accompanied by an adult, called a Group Leader. Play Captains are often carrying supplies for cleaning, playing, reading, and a small first aid kit. You may see us walking from one street to another or running/playing on Play Streets with other groups of children..

A photograph of a young woman, a Play Captain, wearing a red t-shirt with 'Come Play' and 'WWW.PLAYCAPTAINS.COM' on the back. She is sitting on the ground and painting a child's face with white paint. A palette of colorful paints is visible in the foreground. In the background, there is a white van, a silver car, and a metal fence.

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What we look like: Play Captains and Fab Youth Philly staff will be complying with Covid-19 guidelines, and will be wearing face masks and/or other face coverings. Play Captains will be wearing red t-shirts that say “Play Captain” on them. Play Captains are between the ages of 15-19. The adult Group Leaders wear gray t-shirts that say “Staff” on them.

What we are concerned about: Play Captains are teenagers from all over Philadelphia that primarily work in the Manuta and Belmont neighborhoods of West Philly and the Kensington neighborhood of North Philly. Play Captains come from many different backgrounds, races, religions, orientations, etc., and like many teenagers, are nervous they will be “profiled” by the Police Department and other adults and authority figures. We will also be working in neighborhoods that have been dramatically impacted by Covid-19, as well as recent protest activity. These neighborhoods have also traditionally experienced structural racism that manifests in high rates of poverty, drug activity, crime, homelessness, drug addiction, mental illness, and over-policing. As young people, and particularly as Black and brown teenagers who live in these communities, Play Captains and adult staff are concerned with racial bias, injustice and police brutality.



WHAT WE LOOK
LIKE

OUR QUESTIONS FOR POLICE OFFICERS

Considering the Play Captains will be traveling in small groups (3-5 people) accompanied by an adult, what can WE do to ensure our safety from both potential crime in the neighborhood and to prevent our employees from being profiled by the Police or other authority figures in the community? Play Captains will be wearing red t-shirts, face guards and/or masks. *How can the police department ensure the safety of our Play Captains as they walk from street to street?*

Due to recent protest and police activity, many of the areas the Play Captains will be working (in both Kensington and Mantua) have been considered “hot spots”. There have been many reports, videos, and social media posts regarding innocent bystanders being targeted by police regardless of their involvement with the protests. *What information can the Police Department provide to ensure the safety of our staff in these areas?*

What has the city of Philadelphia and/or the Police Department done to affirm the safety of our communities in regard to both Covid-19 and recent protest and police activity?



WHAT WE ARE
CONCERNED ABOUT



2019 West Philadelphia Promise
Neighborhood Play Captains

Lastly, our staff are hard- working, professional, young people and adults that care deeply about their community and want to make it a safer and more playful place for all residents. We encourage all community members, including the Police Department, to engage with us in positive ways including playing and talking with us while we are in the neighborhood. Our team is well prepared and informed of the risks and dangers associated with the work we do, and ask that our staff be given the same respect and support from the communities we work in.

contact us!

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