

PLAYWORKS

IMPACT REPORT

2025-2026

PLAYWORKS PACIFIC NORTHWEST

PO Box 15037, Portland, OR, 97293

www.playworks.org/pacific-northwest/

A Moment of Reflection

Tami Daoud and Natalee

A cornerstone of Playworks has always been our Junior Coach Program—a program that doesn't just teach games or routines, but unlocks leadership in students who might never have seen themselves as leaders before. When 4th and 5th graders step into that purple shirt, something powerful happens. They begin to see themselves differently. And when that happens, the entire school community feels it.

The Junior Coach Program is a key component of many of our services, and for good reason. When students are given real responsibility, real voice, and real opportunities to shine, we see magic unfold throughout the year.

Our Associate Director, Tami, knows this magic better than most. She began her Playworks journey as a coach at Brookwood Elementary back in 2013. The program was brand new to the school, and the students who signed up were taking a leap of faith. Some were the kids you might expect: loud, energetic, already comfortable leading games on the playground. But others were quiet. The students who often go unnoticed, while their leadership waits for the right moment to surface.

One of those students was Natalee Dold, a 5th grader who decided to take a chance on becoming a Junior Coach. At the beginning of the year, Natalee was so shy that answering a question would make her turn bright red. But week by week, game by game, cheer by cheer, something shifted. She found a voice. She found confidence. She found joy in leading others. By the end of the year, Natalee wasn't just participating – she was thriving. She joined every Playworks sports league she could. She laughed with teammates. She led cheers at the end of recess. And she built a bond with Tami that has stayed with them both.

Fast forward eleven years.

Last summer, during a training, one of our Program Specialists sent Tami a photo from a POP/GM1 training in South Umpqua. In the picture was a woman standing beside her. It wasn't until the Specialist shared her name that Tami realized who she was looking at.

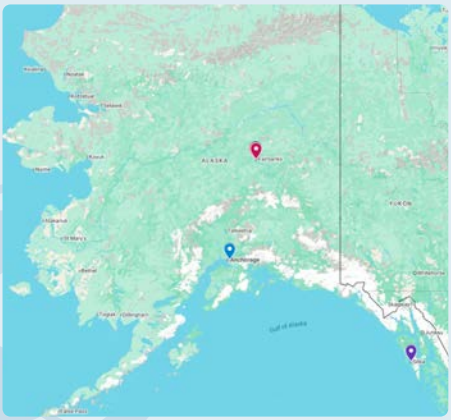
It was Natalee.

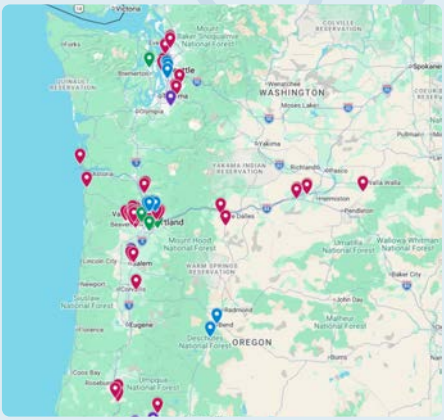
Her former 5th grade Junior Coach—now an educator herself, working as a special education teacher in an elementary school.

A student who once whispered answers
and blushed with every word...
is now shaping young lives every day.
That is the power of Junior Coaching.
That is the power of giving kids a chance to lead.
That is the power of Playworks.



Our Impact





2025-2026 Impact Snapshot

37,115
Students

405+
Youth Leaders

118
Schools and Partners



At Playworks, we believe in the power of play to bring out the best in every kid. We create a place for every kid on the playground to get active, build valuable skills, connect, and have fun.

We partner with schools, districts, and community-based organizations to provide services that include on-site coaches, professional training for adults, and consultative partnerships.

Our evidence-based programs have been rigorously evaluated; they have proven to get kids more active and ready to learn, to build stronger relationships, and to develop critical skills like teamwork, cooperation, and conflict resolution which benefit them now and into their future.

Junior Coach Leadership Summit



Junior Coaches are stellar 4th and 5th grade students who apply and are chosen to be leaders on their playgrounds during recess. Through the program, Junior Coaches set up games, invite students to play, lead group games, support conflict resolution and act as positive role models for their peers and younger students.

This year, 441 Junior Coaches from 13 schools were celebrated at their individual school sites. The celebrations happened at school sites during the school day, so we were able to provide an opportunity for every single JC to feel appreciated for their hard work and growth as a leader.

Thank you to our Junior Coaches for their dedication to supporting safe and healthy play this year!

Partnership in Education and Resilience

Holistic Student Assessment Retrospective (HSAR)

Every year, Junior Coaches complete the HSAR, capturing their perspective on growth and experience in the program.

89% Junior Coaches reported positive change in **empathy**

80% Junior Coaches reported positive change in **academic motivation**

77% Junior Coaches reported positive change in **learning interest**

80% Junior Coaches reported positive change in **critical thinking**

82% Junior Coaches reported positive change in **action orientation**

Annual Survey

Every year, Playworks surveys educators at our partner schools to learn more about their experience with Playworks services.

96% of educators agree Playworks helps students **build positive relationships with peers**

89% of educators agree Playworks helps students **develop the skills they need to succeed in their classroom**

97% of educators agree Playworks helps students **learn how to cooperate with each other**

95% of educators agree Playworks helps students **strengthen their overall health and well-being**

95% of educators agree Playworks helps students **use respectful communication**

95% of educators agree Playworks helps the school **build an environment of belonging**

93% of educators agree Playworks helps the school **increase the number of students who are physically active**

84% of educators agree Playworks helps the school **reduce the number of physical or verbal conflicts**

89% of educators agree Playworks helps the school **strengthen students' abilities to resolve conflict on their own**

93% of educators agree Playworks helps **foster an engaging learning environment**

97% of educators agree Playworks helps **give adults opportunities to experience joy with students**

96% of educators agree Playworks helps **increase the number of kids engaged in healthy play with their peers**

TagTeam Annual Survey

The TagTeam Certification program builds the capacity of community-based organizations to deliver high-quality recess and youth leadership programming in local elementary schools.

89% of educators agree that during recess, TagTeam **increases the variety of games and activities**

100% of educators agree that during recess, TagTeam **reduces the number of disciplinary incidents**

93% of educators agree that during recess, TagTeam **increases the number of students engaged in play with peers**

100% of educators agree TagTeam **creates opportunities for all students to play together**

100% of educators agree TagTeam **helps students develop skills to succeed in the classroom**

100% of educators agree TagTeam **helps students build positive relationships with their peers**

100% of educators agree TagTeam **fosters an engaging learning environment**

100% of educators agree TagTeams helps **increase student motivation to come to school**

100% of educators agree TagTeams helps **strengthen relationships between adults and students**

Bring the Power of Play to Your School!

Explore impactful, play-based programs and resources designed to support student well-being, engagement, and leadership. You can help bring the benefits of play to your community!

Connect with our Associate Director at tami.daoud@playworks.org.

Champions of Play



Rebecca Chase

My partnership with Playworks began more than 13 years ago when I was a principal in the David Douglas School District. I first learned about Playworks from the husband of one of our teachers, who was a Playworks coach. As he described the program, I knew it was exactly what we needed on our playground.

We were fortunate to have a full-time coach, and together we transformed recess into a positive, inclusive environment where students were actively engaged in play. We saw a dramatic decrease in playground referrals, and the impact extended far beyond recess. Our entire staff was trained in Playworks strategies, including quick, positive ways to gain students' attention. Teachers incorporated weekly game time into their classrooms, using play to build relationships, strengthen classroom belonging, and create a positive school culture.

When I transitioned to a new school and district, I saw many of the same challenges on the playground. Once again, Playworks came to the rescue! We completed a Recess Reboot and coached our playground staff to create an environment where every student feels included, has a game to play, and is encouraged to be kind to others. The games emphasize participation and encouragement rather than being "out," with students giving high fives and saying, "Good job!" and "Nice try!"

Over the past several years, we have continued to take every opportunity to partner with Playworks. Our Junior Coach program gives students leadership opportunities to help on the playground, teach new games, and serve as positive role models for younger students. Students love the variety of games and the positive culture that has developed on our playground. Teachers and staff appreciate that they are no longer spending their time solving problems after every recess.

As a principal, I have seen firsthand how Playworks can transform a playground and, ultimately, a school community. What I value most is how closely Playworks' mission aligns with what we want for every child: a playground—and a school—where students feel safe, included, connected.



Francesca Sinapi

My first experience with Playworks was in 2015 as a building principal. I quickly saw that recess could be more than a break in the day. It could be a place where students build relationships, develop confidence, solve problems, and experience belonging. Since moving to the district office, my role has shifted to helping sustain and strengthen this work across our schools. I help ensure staff receive training, recess leads are supported, and schools have strong systems, structures, routines, and rituals in place.

Over time, we have seen a more positive climate and culture on our playgrounds, more engaging and inclusive ways for students to play, and a shift in how adults view their role, from supervising recess to actively supporting play, relationships, and belonging. We have also become more intentional about using data. Through a district dashboard, we can identify strengths, monitor needs, and provide targeted support to schools. I am honored and grateful for our continued partnership with Playworks.

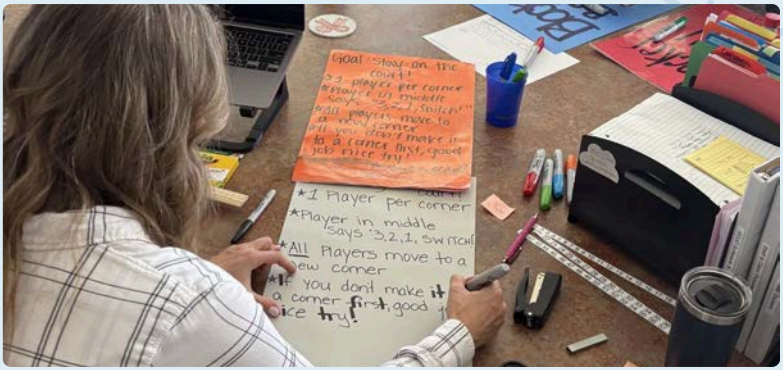
"Together, we are creating playgrounds where students feel known, valued, connected, and included."

Recess Rockstars

Sep:	**Sharyl Rardin - Paraeducator, Verne Duncan Elementary**
Oct:	**Sarah Smith - Educational Assistant, Butte Falls Charter**
Nov:	**Holli Cathcart - Paraeducator, Riverside Elementary**
Dec:	**Valli Ganser - 6th Grade Teacher, Ferguson Elementary**
Jan:	**Kellen Hawley - Elementary School Wide Support, Barnes**
Feb:	**Brody Jenson, Dennis Franklin, Laina Morris, & Jami Rainey - Intramurals Staff, Patrick Elementary**
Mar:	**Nadia Kuznetsov - Admin Assistant/Paraeducator, Linwood Elementary**
Apr:	**Nicole Malone - Paraeducator, Linwood Elementary**
May:	**Tim Poppa - Classified Staff, Mae Richardson Elementary**

Throughout the year, our program staff work and collaborate with thousands of school staff from all over the Pacific Northwest. Each month they nominate a school staff member that stands out for going above and beyond to make a positive impact on their playgrounds.

More than just recognition, this award inspires staff to champion recess, step into leadership and model positive engagement to transform the playground into a place where every kid belongs and has fun.



Nadia Kuznetsov, March Recess Rockstar Winner

Shoutouts

Your Recess Rockstars deserve a shoutout! Snap a pic, share the fun, and tag us so we can cheer them on too!

playworkspacificnw

Stories from the Field


Junior Coaches at Providence Park

First Kick - Portland Thorns

Junior Coaches from Barnes Elementary in Beaverton were invited to participate in the First Kick at a Portland Thorns soccer game this Spring, bringing joy and play to the field as their families and teachers watched from the stands.

Seven Junior Coaches took to the Thorns field to watch players warm-up, receive a shoutout by the announcers, and deliver a kick-off into the goal before the game.

Over 100 community members from Barnes, including families, staff members, and their networks, were able to attend the game to support these Junior Coaches and see their leadership in action.

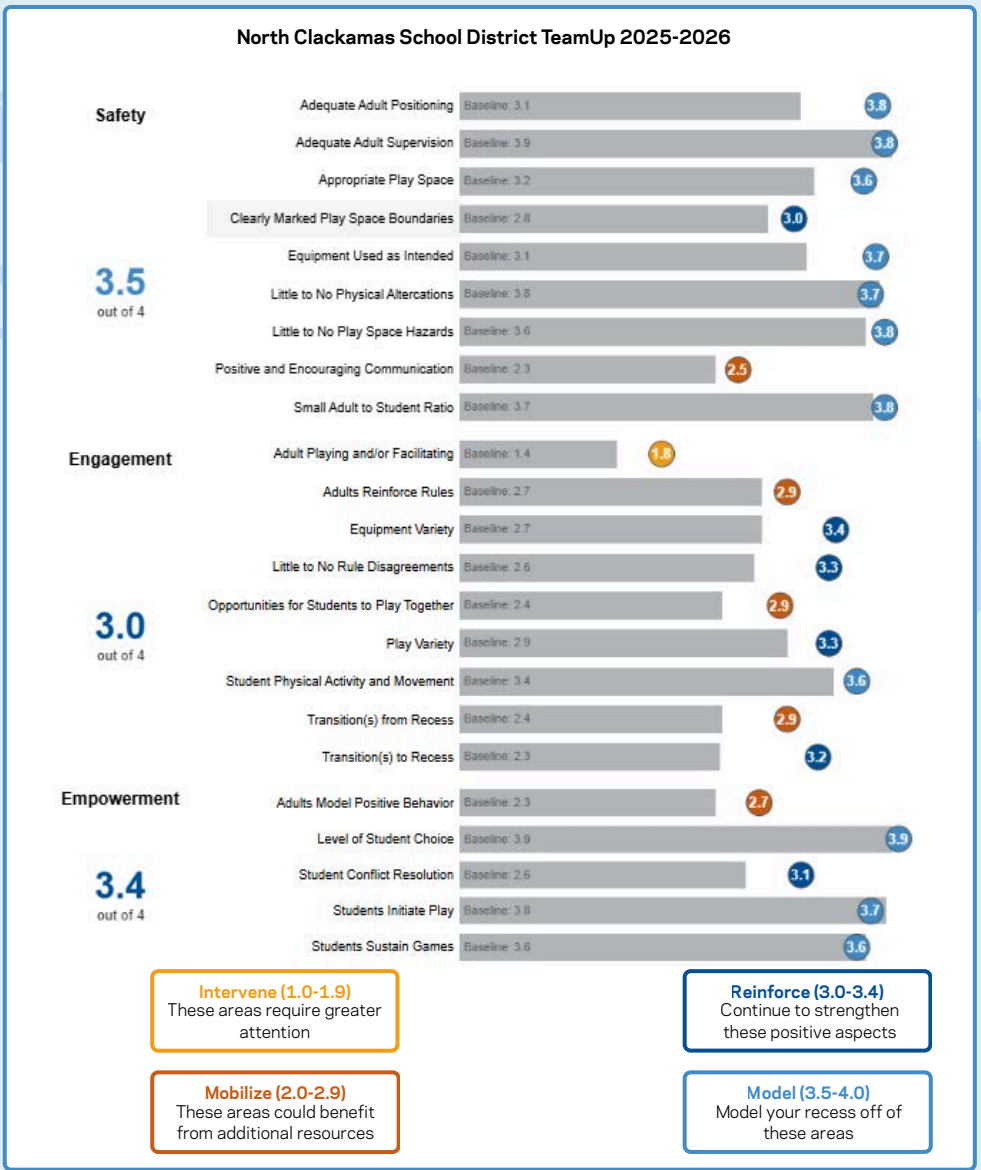
It was one Junior Coach's first time attending a professional soccer game, and they described their participation as "a core memory." They left the event with hopes of joining a Thorns soccer camp over the summer.

Overall, this event really got to highlight the importance of not only providing leadership programs for youth, but also providing opportunities for those youth to feel highlighted and valued by their community.


Junior Coaches on the job at Barnes Elementary

Great Recess Framework Results

One of our closest longstanding district-level partnerships is with the North Clackamas School District. We use the Great Recess Framework as an externally validated, reliable tool to analyze and implement sustainable, systems-change at schools across the region. This high-level view shows growth in



Advancing Equity in Leadership Program

Taylor Timms, Associate Program Director was selected to be part of the 25-26 Advancing Equity in Leadership Program (AELP). AELP was a fellowship designed to build the capacity of BIPOC staff and to champion equity initiatives. She traveled to DC to start the program. The foundation was set by exploring the origins of race and systems level change, and then moved into countering dominant leadership. There were discussions around leadership vs. management and tools for peer coaching. They also learned to incorporate mindfulness and healing practices to sustain leadership and sharpen communication skills through nonviolent techniques. The curriculum emphasized adaptive leadership, teaching fellows how to navigate organizational change and transitions effectively. The program concluded in Oakland, CA with Ignite presentations that allowed fellows to reflect on their personal and professional growth while solidifying their commitment to creating equitable work environments.



Photo caption: Taylor Timms third from the right

Corporate Engagements

Nike Play Days



Nike Play Day

Two times last year, we had Nike visit school campuses in North Clackamas SD to understand how Playworks and play impact a school community. They also got to join in and play games at recess. At Oak Grove Elementary, the Nike Jordan team got to lead a game of Hungry Fox with all grades. There was a ton of laughter and memories made with a group of 5th grade students who still ask about them. At Riverside Elementary, Nike staff from different departments witnessed a Junior Coach Olympics day, where students got special passports at the beginning of recess and were encouraged to play at game stations led by 4th and 5th grade youth leaders. Nike staff supported the youth leaders by joining their games and helping with group management. The Nike team was super impressed by the Junior Coaches overall; specifically they noted their ability to set up game zones, lead a game with large groups of students, and solve conflicts.

2026 PBJ Best Places to Work

We're honored to be recognized by the Portland Business Journal (PBJ) as one of the 2026 Best Places to Work. This marks 4 years in a row. At Playworks, we focus on prioritizing staff well-being, work-life balance, and a sense of purpose. We know that when our team thrives, so do the communities and youth we serve. Ultimately, this recognition is a celebration of the people who make Playworks a place where passion meets impact.



Corporate Partnerships

Corporate Kickball Tournament

12 teams gathered for a day of friendly competition and community impact. KPFF emerged as the 2026 Champions after a tense final match against We. Communications, who earned the Spirit Award for their outstanding enthusiasm.

Through sponsorships, donations, and team registrations, we raised over $50,000 to power safe, healthy, and meaningful play across the region. We couldn't have done it without our supporters – thank you!



KPFF, Tournament Champions

Title Sponsor

Team Sponsors

Play Ball: Seattle Mariners Recess Takeover

Thanks to our ongoing partnership with the Seattle Mariners, Mariners Care Foundation, and Mariners Training Center (MTC), Playworks brought the excitement of baseball to students at two Seattle elementary schools—Rainier View Elementary and Broadview Thompson Elementary. At Broadview Thompson Elementary, Mariners players Cole Young, Patrick Wisdom, and Jhonny Pereda visited campus, leading high-energy recess games, sharing baseball tips, and encouraging students to play, be active, and support one another. At Rainier View Elementary, Emerson Hancock, Connor Joe, and Nick Davila joined students for a morning of play and connection. Students practiced teamwork, learned new skills, and cheered on their favorite Mariners.

These exciting visits created unforgettable memories and strengthened our school communities—showing the power of play to build confidence, belonging, and joy.



Connor Joe



Cole Young


Patrick Wisdom

Partner with Playworks

Partnering with Playworks means your team plays with purpose while making a lasting impact on youth in our community. Together, we can get every kid in the game. Reach out to our team at pacnwdev@playworks.org today.

Regional Advisory Board



Shannon Davidson, Co-Chair
Found Insights, LLC



Christie Wakefield, Co-Chair
Pacific Office Automation



Emily Boscacci-Franch
Cambia Health Solutions



Katie Banks
The Standard



Natalie Lieblick
We. Communications



Avery Dukes
American Heart Association



Sean Evans
U.S. Bank



Nicole Voorhees
Save the Children

Community Partners

We are incredibly grateful for our amazing donors that help sustain safe, healthy play in the Pacific Northwest! Our outstanding impact this year is made possible thanks to your generosity.

All Star Partners

Seattle Mariners

James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation

M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust

Movement Makers

OCF Joseph E. Weston Public Foundation
US Bank Foundation
The Standard

Thank you to the many **individual** contributors and participants in our event as well. Together you all help us reach more children across our region. We appreciate you.

PLAYWORKS

PO Box 15037, Portland, OR, 97293

www.playworks.org/pacific-northwest/