



# NATIONAL PAL

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ATHLETIC/ACTIVITIES LEAGUES, INC.

## Fall 2020 Newsletter

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Kids, Cops & Community



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## National PAL Announces National Ambassador for STEM

National PAL is thrilled to officially announce Mrs. Joan Higginbotham as the National Ambassador for STEM. An electrical engineer and retired NASA astronaut, Higginbotham is the third of only three African American women to go into space. At an early age, Higginbotham fell in love with science and math and while matriculating to high school, was introduced to INROADS, a program which exposes women and minorities to the field of engineering. Because of her participation in this program, Higginbotham decided to pursue engineering in college, making the most of her love for science and math.



*Joan Higginbotham,  
National Ambassador  
for STEM*

While in college, Higginbotham interned with IBM as an engineer and was later offered a job in sales upon graduating. While considering IBM's offer, Higginbotham received a call from a NASA manager at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, who offered her a position as a rocket scientist, launching shuttles into space. Nine years later with 53 successful shuttle launches under her belt, Higginbotham was selected as an astronaut candidate by NASA. She reported to the Johnson Space Center in Houston, TX, where she spent the next 11 years of her career. On December 9, 2006, Higginbotham and the crew of STS-116 launched into the night sky aboard Space Shuttle Discovery, on a 13-day mission to continue building the International Space Station.

In her role as National Ambassador for STEM, Higginbotham hopes to inspire youth, especially young women, to consider a career path in STEM. Higginbotham notes that, "young girls begin to lose interest in science and math around the age of 12, believing it is too difficult or uncool. Math and science are no more difficult for girls than for boys." She also wants to expose youth to STEM career opportunities, noting that becoming an astronaut was not part of her original plan; but became a reality, due to her background in STEM. Asked what drew her to the program, Higginbotham said, "National PAL is a great organization that offers kids guidance and exposure to opportunities they may not otherwise have." She is looking forward to using this platform as National Ambassador for STEM to relay the message to all youth, "If I can have an incredible career in STEM, so can you."



*Joan Higginbotham chats with Jeff Hood during a NPAL Community Connection session.*



# The Re-Engagement of Nigeria, Africa PAL

National PAL would like to announce the re-engagement of Nigeria, Africa PAL.

Just as with many of our PAL Chapters across the United States, Nigeria PAL has also been impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the pandemic, schools have been closed and sporting activities have been suspended across the country.

Despite financial constraints on the Chapter due to the pandemic, Nigeria PAL has been conducting programming and educating people, especially youth and those in remote communities on the importance of staying safe and wearing a face mask during this time. Additionally, the Chapter has been distributing free face masks to members of the community and providing helpful tips on social distancing and frequent hand washing.

In spite of the pandemic-related challenges, Executive Director, Rasheed Saka, states that “we have been able to continue to support our youth through education, accommodation, feeding, sporting and recreation activities.” Many of these activities have been done remotely or through social distancing, simultaneously emphasizing the importance of support and youth development during this time.

Nigeria PAL was established and approved by the federal government of Nigeria in May 2012 and as a national organization, presently has 250 youth members (150 male and 100 female) across the country. As part of their regular programming, the Chapter organizes meetings and symposiums, inviting professionals and entrepreneurs to talk with and educate the youth about how to prepare themselves to become good and successful citizens of tomorrow.

Nigeria PAL also organizes sporting events and competitions among youth, as well as helping the community develop sanitation programs and visitation to orphanage homes as means of showing commitment to community service and helping others.



*Nigeria PAL youth hand out face masks to members of the community and provide tips on how to stay safe during the global COVID-19 pandemic.*



# Announcing the Launch of Our New Website

After several months of working hard and collaborating with one of our newest partners, SportsEngine, National PAL is delighted to officially announce the launch of our newly designed website. In an effort to make the new website easier to navigate and more user-friendly, we will now use SportsEngine's Sports Relationship Management (SRM) software to power our site. SRM is a technology for connecting and managing relationships between people and organizations through all levels of sport. SRM also allows National PAL to connect with Chapters, Chapter members and families to share data, streamline reporting and approval, and manage programs with intuitive software.



Additionally, National PAL wanted our visitors to have an easier way to learn about NPAL's mission and to browse information based on their own choice of navigation throughout the site. By making this option available, we now offer better access for users to function and navigate throughout the website to gather information About Us, Membership, Programs, Newsletters, and more. Other new features on our site consist of integrated social media feeds for Facebook as well as buttons for our YouTube, Instagram and LinkedIn pages.

Through our partnership with SportsEngine, local NPAL Chapters also have the ability to redesign their website and utilize the same software and structure as National PAL. For more information on how to take advantage of this opportunity, please email us at [copsandkids@nationalpal.org](mailto:copsandkids@nationalpal.org).

## 2020 National PAL Virtual Youth Summit

In a time of so much change and uncertainty due to the global COVID-19 pandemic that has impacted so many, we acknowledge the need to continue to provide opportunities for our youth to build connections, have fun, and feel empowered.

With the success of past Youth Mentoring and Leadership Summits, we knew there was great anticipation for the 2020 Summit, but realized that with keeping the health and safety of our Chapters in mind, an in-person event was not in the best interest for all. Despite facing some challenges, we were still able to bring together hundreds of youth and adults from across the country and the Virgin Islands to host our first ever Virtual Youth Summit from August 18<sup>th</sup> through August 20<sup>th</sup>.



2020 NPAL Virtual Youth Summit



The first day was kicked off with a welcome from National PAL CEO, Jeff Hood, and was followed by sessions full of information important to our youth, allowing them to engage with dynamic speakers and be inspired by STEM and social media-based activities. Hector Ruiz of Microsoft hosted a session showing participants how to code and design their own app. Shortly thereafter, participants heard from Richard Taylor, Jr. who spoke on emotions and steps that youth can take based on different feelings they experience. The third and final session of the day was full of energy, to say the least, as Ohavia Phillips, M.S., D.B.A., a multimedia mogul and host of “The Oh Show”, spoke to participants on how to successfully interview with the media. During her session, Phillips emphasized that “everybody has confidence” and reminded youth to “not count yourself out because of your age and to show people how serious you are by how often you show up.”

Day two of the Virtual Youth Summit was just as exciting as day one. NPAL Assistant Grant Manager, Whitney Bennington, started the day with an interview with the Phills Foundation, which promotes educational awareness throughout the nation by advancing academic and intellectual growth among youth through physical, athletic, civil, and social development.

Following the interview, Claudine Malone of the Beau Biden Foundation for the Protection of Children spoke to participants on the importance of safety on the net. In an age where so many youth are connected through technology, Malone took youth through age appropriate scenarios and possible strategies on navigating the digital world. Just as with day one, day two ended with a bang as GRAMMY Award-nominated artist SaulPaul shared his story of how he grew up without a mother and a father as well as being incarcerated, but has gone on to make a name for himself in the music and film industries.



*GRAMMY Award-nominated artists, SaulPaul, shares a smile with Virtual Youth Summit participants after sharing his story and playing some music for them.*

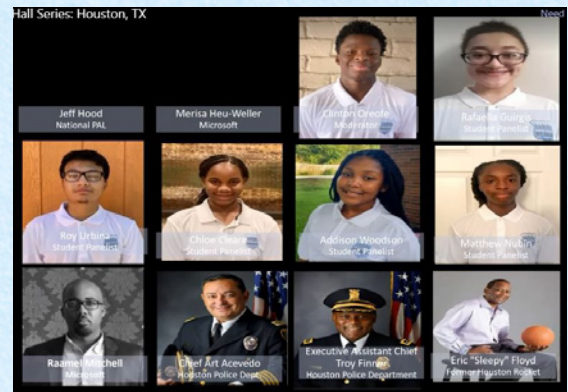
The third and final day of the first ever Virtual Youth Summit was the perfect conclusion to such an awesome event. Hector Ruiz hosted part two to his “Code and Design Your Own App” session that was such a hit on day one. Following Ruiz were Anthony Johnson who hosted “ABC’s of Life” and Dr. Kenston Griffin who hosted “You Are the Difference, That Makes the Difference.” Both Johnson and Griffin spoke to youth on the importance of creating a strong foundation for themselves and creating an opportunity for them to feel empowered. With the three days gone by in the blink of an eye, NPAL Grant Manager, Angie Caffee, gave closing remarks, thanking our participating Chapters for allowing the Virtual Youth Summit to be such a success and offered an opportunity for reflection on the past three days and opportunities that are to come.

National PAL would like to thank everyone who helped make this event possible and go off without a hitch. We will continue to emphasize the importance for Chapters to connect and experience new things and look forward to being back together again, in-person, next year during the 2021 National PAL Youth Mentoring and Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C.



# National PAL to Host Town Halls Bringing Together Kids, Cops & Community

As the world's foremost leader in engaging kids, cops & community, National PAL is delighted to announce the formation of an initial 12-City Virtual Town Hall Series aimed at bringing individuals, along with community change agents, together in dialogue to establish a collective call to action led by youth. The National PAL "From the Voices of Youth" Community Town Hall Series presented by Microsoft was created to invite one of the missing and unheard voices of our society to the table to be heard and included within discussion of positive and intentional change and activism. National PAL knows it is vital, that in lieu of dictating to our young people, it is not only essential to include their voices at the proverbial table, but to also allow them the opportunity to be seriously heard and expressive of their feelings and thoughts. Topics to be discussed and elaborated upon during the sessions will include social justice, racism, equality, law enforcement relations, educational reform, community restoration and young adult direction and activism.



*Panelists from Houston, TX during their Virtual Town Hall session.*

National PAL is excited to host this 12-City Virtual Tour Series (in conjunction with our PAL Chapters via Microsoft Teams Live) which kicked off in Richmond, CA on Thursday, August 27<sup>th</sup> and has had much success so far in other cities, such as Houston, TX; New Orleans, LA; Memphis, TN; Philadelphia, PA; Dunn, NC; and North Miami Beach, FL where they have discussed topics such as social programs and police officer conduct and accountability. The remaining virtual tour stops include Henrico, VA; Oklahoma City, OK; East Cleveland, OH; Seattle, WA; and Chicago, IL. Each tour stop seeks to include as panelists, the cities' Chiefs of Police or Sheriffs, their Mayor and/or High-Level elected officials (Governor, Congressman, Senator), community advocates, decision makers, celebrities and most importantly, community youth.

"National PAL is honored to take the lead in conducting and hosting such high-level and meaningful town hall series events across the country, aimed at engaging our community youth in meaningful and intentional dialogue with community change agents that will make for lasting and impactful conversations," states National PAL Chief Executive Officer, Jeff Hood. We are also proud and excited to announce having secured support from committed corporate partners including The Microsoft Corporation, Extended Stay America, and SportsEngine.

For information on National PAL, or to view the complete Tour Series Schedule, visit [www.NationalPAL.org](http://www.NationalPAL.org).



## NATIONAL PAL

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ATHLETIC/ACTIVITIES LEAGUES, INC.

301 McCullough Drive  
Suite 400  
Charlotte, NC 28262

**Phone:** 704-909-2841  
**Email:** [copsandkids@nationalpal.org](mailto:copsandkids@nationalpal.org)  
**Website:** [nationalpal.org](http://nationalpal.org)

