



HOW TRIBAL PDS CAN GET INVOLVED IN YOUTH PROGRAMS

Connecting Youth and Law Enforcement

Now more than ever, some youth feel disconnected from law enforcement. It is important for the youth to understand that law enforcement officials are there to protect them and keep the community safe, not to give them a hard time or get them in trouble without cause. However, as a law enforcement official, it is ultimately your responsibility to take the initiative towards bridging that gap, and getting involved in local youth programs is one of the best ways to do so. Read below for some quick suggestions of what you can do to get involved!



Ways to Get Involved

- **Set up a meeting with the director of the local youth program**

Ask for the opportunity to come in and volunteer, whether it is to help with homework or just to play with the youth in the games room. Participating in regular afterschool activities is the best way to start developing positive relationships with youth.

- **Start your own afterschool youth program**

The National Police Athletic/Activities League encourages law enforcement officials all over the country to run their own afterschool programs to help bridge the gap and reinforce positive interactions between youth and law enforcement. Check out the manual on “**How to Start Your Own Tribal PAL**” in the Tribal Database.



- **Host activities that give youth an opportunity to connect with law enforcement**

Some examples include: **The Mirror Project**, which is a role-reversal activity law enforcement officials run with a group of youth ages 10-12. Common scenarios are developed, and law enforcement plays the role of the teen, while the teen plays the role of the law enforcement. It is a great way for both sides to gain perspective and understand how their actions affect outcomes. **Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation’s Badges for Baseball program** is designed simply to pair cops with kids to play and learn. For more information and to sign up for training, visit (<https://ripkenfoundation.org/programs/badges-baseball>). **Fish with Police** is a more informal event where youth and law enforcement come together to go fishing at a local pond.



- **Participate in or organize a National Night Out event in your community**

National Night Out focuses on community police awareness and promotes positive interactions between emergency services and the community. It can consist of safety demonstrations and exhibits, live music, cookouts, fun activities, and more. It takes place annually on the first Tuesday of August. Visit (<https://natw.org>) for more information.



Hopefully these few suggestions will be enough to encourage as many law enforcement officials to get involved as possible. By getting involved, our youth will grow up understanding the role of law enforcement in the community, and have a deeper respect for all that you do to keep us safe!