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**Finish Line Youth Foundation Grant Brings Summer Fun to Erie House**

*The \$5,000 grant will provide athletic equipment and after-hours staffing for children and youth ages 5–18 in the Expanded Learning Programs.*

July 10, 2017 (CHICAGO)—The Finish Line Youth Foundation awarded a \$5,000 grant to Erie Neighborhood House to help its Expanded Learning Programs for Children and Youth purchase athletic equipment and support staff supervising sports and recreation activities.

“This grant from the Finish Line Youth Foundation is a perfect fit for our Expanded Learning Programs,” says Erie House executive director Kirstin Chernawsky. “We operate on a full-day schedule during the summer months, and this is a critical time of the year to provide students with a positive, safe environment where our children and youth can be active and lead healthy lives.”

The Expanded Learning Programs have proven to be an effective violence prevention initiative serving close to 300 at-risk children and youth ages 5–18. At Erie House, sports and recreation activities play an important role alongside academic initiatives, leadership development and socio-emotional development.

“Sports have a tremendous health benefit for our youth,” says Joshua Fulcher, director of the Expanded Learning Programs. He points out that many students enrolled in the program hail from parts of the city where access to safe spaces for play is either limited or missing altogether. “This grant will allow our kids to play sports they love, learn sports they haven’t been exposed to, and generally be more active.”

Fulcher believes firmly in the holistic impact sports can have on children and youth. “The health and cognitive benefits of activity are well documented,” he says, “but the opportunities for overcoming adversity and making friends within sports are just as valuable.”

The grant from the Finish Line Youth Foundation will provide equipment—including basketballs and adjustable hoops, whiffle bat and ball sets, indoor soccer nets and floor hockey equipment—as well as pay staff wages when they need to work late or weekend hours in order to organize and supervise sporting events held at Erie House. Earlier this month, Erie House hosted a Saturday 3-on-3 tournament for 8- through 12-year-olds in the program.

Finish Line launched its Youth Foundation in 1998 in order to create and enhance opportunities for underserved youth to participate in community-based athletic programs. Since then, the Finish Line Youth Foundation has awarded more than \$17 million in funding toward the Special Olympics and other nonprofit organizations like Erie House across the country.

For more information about enrolling in the Expanded Learning Programs, please visit [www.eriehouse.org](http://www.eriehouse.org) or call 312-583-5800.

*About The Finish Line Youth Foundation*

*The Finish Line Youth Foundation strives to make a difference in the lives of youth in the communities where employees and customers live, work and play. The Youth Foundation funds non-profit organizations that provide opportunities for kids to participate in community-based youth athletic programs and camps that emphasize active lifestyles, especially programs that serve disadvantaged and special needs kids. For more information about the Youth Foundation, please visit [www.flyf.org](http://www.flyf.org) and watch the “Kids Are Awesome” video. Follow Finish Line Youth*

Foundation on Twitter at [Twitter.com/FinishLineYF](https://twitter.com/FinishLineYF) as well as on Instagram at [Instagram.com/FinishLineYF](https://www.instagram.com/FinishLineYF) and “like” the Youth Foundation on Facebook at [Facebook.com/FinishLineYouthFoundation](https://www.facebook.com/FinishLineYouthFoundation).

*About Erie Neighborhood House*

*Erie Neighborhood House (ENH) is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization that reaches 5,500 people annually, empowering them to build better lives while strengthening their communities. ENH offers Chicago’s Latino and diverse low-income residents a range of community-based education programs. With forward-thinking leadership, ENH is committed to continuing its legacy of cost effective, award-winning programming. For more information, please visit [www.eriehouse.org](http://www.eriehouse.org).*

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