



# Police youth ALLIANCE

Families Behind the Badge Children's Foundation

CULTIVATING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERACTIONS BETWEEN POLICE OFFICERS  
AND THE CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE



“

I see students really enjoy having a relationship with the police officer—and being able to say that I have a police officer who is also a friend. That is not something every student can say.

- Officer's Voice

”



The Families Behind the Badge Children's Foundation (FBBCF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization committed to improving the lives of children in the Greater Philadelphia and South Jersey area. The Foundation achieves this by providing necessary financial relief for the families of fallen or critically injured first responders and cultivating positive relationships and interactions between police officers and the children in the communities they serve.

The Families Behind the Badge Children's Foundation advances its mission through funds raised from several key events, including The Ben to The Shore Bike Tour, a 34-year tradition. Since its inception, the Foundation has raised over \$9.5 million. In 2019, FBBCF raised more than \$1.1 million and supported 45 local children's charities, families of fallen first responders, and 32 Police Youth Alliance programs.

## OUR STRATEGY

Police officers who patrol the community become part of the community, stepping inside classrooms to engage, guide, mentor, and teach children from disadvantaged neighborhoods. These meaningful experiences can build trust and understanding and set the stage for an ongoing, positive dynamic beyond the school years.

“

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES SHOULD CREATE OPPORTUNITIES IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES FOR POSITIVE, NON-ENFORCEMENT INTERACTIONS WITH POLICE.

– *President Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing Final Report, May 2015*

”

## ABOUT US

### **Building Bridges to Connect Officers to the Community and the Community to Officers**

Widening rifts and rising tensions between urban communities and law enforcement inspired the launch of the Police Youth Alliance in 2015. Guided by the Task Force on 21st Century Policing’s recommendations, the Police Youth Alliance offers opportunities for uniformed officers and students to interact in a positive manner.

Philadelphia’s then Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey had chaired the Task Force on 21st Century Policing. He fully supported the Police Youth Alliance’s innovative model: connecting police precincts with their neighborhood schools and placing officers in the classroom to teach enrichment activities. The Philadelphia Police Department’s continued commitment has propelled the Police Youth Alliance’s growth and impact.

### **Where We are Today and Our Vision for Tomorrow**

The Police Youth Alliance piloted its approach with three enrichment activities in 2015. Today, the program reaches children at 13 different schools through 33 enrichment programs led by officers from nine precincts.

In the wake of recent incidents in Philadelphia and nationwide, especially in communities of color, the need to extend the reach of the Police Youth Alliance takes on even greater importance — and urgency. Our vision is to expand both the variety of enrichment activities and number of partnerships between police precincts and schools.

While there is no single, simple solution, our program is one step to repair, build, and strengthen trust and understanding between police officers and the children and communities they serve.



## OUR APPROACH

### Setting the Stage Early

Driven by the preventative power of reaching children when they are young, the Police Youth Alliance works with elementary and middle school students. For many youth, their first encounter with anything justice related is through law enforcement; the nature of this interaction can make a significant and long-term impression. The Police Youth Alliance helps positively shape children's outlook toward police officers.

“

*I was actually scared at first about the police officer. I didn't know they could come inside the school to teach. I just thought they go around after bad guys. I know now they aren't that bad.*

– Student's Voice

”

### Transforming Perceptions: A Two-Way Street

Equally significant, the Police Youth Alliance provides police officers with opportunities to build relationships, trust, and understanding with youth. This allows law enforcement to more directly appreciate the experience of those within the communities they serve, often seeing them in a new light.



### Opening a Dialogue: Key to Creating Greater Understanding

For both officers and youth, the importance of these personal, positive interactions cannot be overstated. The Police Youth Alliance breaks down barriers and builds bonds. In doing so, we open a critical dialogue, allowing children to talk directly and openly with officers about policing and what the children are seeing in the news and hearing in their community.

### Doubling the Impact: Providing Enrichment Programming to Children in Need

The Police Youth Alliance's benefits extend beyond building bonds between officers and children. It opens the door to critical enrichment activities for children who might not otherwise have access. Living in the nation's poorest large city, Philadelphia's children confront extreme challenges. One in three lives in poverty. Crime is highest in Philadelphia's poorest communities. Poverty's stress undercuts children's ability to learn and escalates behavioral and emotional problems.

Enrichment activities are a safety net. Art and music, sports, and academic enrichment programs can deepen educational engagement, boost self-confidence, and reduce problem behaviors for disadvantaged youth. Despite their positive impact, such activities are out of reach for many children. The Police Youth Alliance connects children in need with vital enrichment activities.

“

*A lot of what happens in urban areas is that the community sees police only when they are policing but never sees the other things they do. My involvement with the Police Youth Alliance and teaching the step dance program allows the kids to see that police officers are multifaceted like everyone else, that we have children, and we have other hobbies—like step dance—and we can be fun.*

*When I first came in to teach step dancing, the students were standoffish. They asked questions based only on what they had seen on TV. Now when I walk in they say 'Hey officer P!'*

– Officers' Voices

”

### Collaborating with Community Partners

The Police Youth Alliance leverages the strength of community resources. The Philadelphia Police Department, Independence Mission Schools, and Temple University Police Department work hand-in-hand with the Police Youth Alliance. These partners help to effectively and cost-efficiently implement programming to best serve students.

“

I told my friends that I, yeah, I know a police officer. I feel like the officer is my friend—he’s cool now.

- Student’s Voice

”

“

*We’ve had a partnership with the Police Youth Alliance for the past five years. The officers come every week and work with our kids in different clubs. The program has built a better relationship between the police department and our students and their families. We are so grateful for the variety of activities and Police Youth Alliance’s commitment to our students.*

- School Representative’s Voice

”



“

The fact that I am able to give back to children in the community this way — this to me is unbelievable.

- Officer's Voice

”



## A SNAPSHOT OF THE POLICE YOUTH ALLIANCE PROGRAM

The Police Youth Alliance provides opportunities for children to explore activities that interest them, try out new things, and gain essential life skills in a safe and welcoming environment. Police officers lead the one-hour enrichment sessions at school each week for 10 weeks, twice an academic year. The school pairs the police officer with a teacher. The subject matter of the activity is selected either by the teacher or the police officer. Officers often initiate activities based on their experience and interests, which continues to broaden the variety of our enrichment programming.

The Police Youth Alliance provides a stipend to the teacher for their time and guidance, covers the cost of materials, equipment, and refreshments. The Police Youth Alliance also gifts books, chess boards, and other items to the children so they can enjoy the activities at home.

Through ongoing program evaluation, we continue to refine our approach to best meet the needs of the youth in each community we serve.

### Educational and enrichment activities include:

- Art
- Reading
- Carpentry
- Spanish
- Chess
- Sports
- Drum line
- Step

“

*I think it's fun and great and it's a lot of hard work and dedication.*

- Student's Voice

”

## Capping Successes with an Annual Celebration

To celebrate the children's successes, the Police Youth Alliance partners with Temple University to host a Year-End Chess Tournament & Showcase. Held in May, more than 200 students and their families from the city's Independence Mission Schools gather for the special celebration. Chess club students compete in a tournament-style competition. The Police Youth Alliance drum line and step club students perform during each round of play, demonstrating their skills and entertaining the attendees.

## How We Are Funded

The Police Youth Alliance is a program of the Families Behind the Badge Children's Foundation and currently relies on funding from the Foundation. To support its mission, the Foundation hosts key events, including its signature The Ben to The Shore Bike Tour 65-mile charity bike ride from Philadelphia to Atlantic City. In 2019, 2,500 The Ben to The Shore Bike Tour riders raised \$1.1 million. The Foundation is led by a volunteer Board of Directors, engages hundreds of dedicated event volunteers, and has two full-time staff members.

“

*It warms my heart. I enjoy coming to read to the children every week. It's my pleasure to do it.*

*It's a good feeling to come here to be able to teach the kids step and have fun with them. It takes me back to my youth and I really enjoy it.*

– Officers' Voices

”



**CONTACT US TO LEARN MORE**

We look forward to answering any of your questions. Please contact:

**Ashley Gallagher | Program Manager, Events & Fundraising | [ashley@fbbcf.org](mailto:ashley@fbbcf.org) | 484.532.7274**

Thank you for your interest in our work to cultivate positive relationships and interactions between police officers and the children in the communities they serve.

A copy of The Families Behind the Badge Children's Foundation's official registration and financial information can be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within PA, 1.800.732.0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.



# FAMILIES BEHIND THE BADGE CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION

555 North Lane, Suite 6060 | Conshohocken, PA 19428 | T: 484.532.7274

[WWW.FBBCF.ORG](http://WWW.FBBCF.ORG)



Tax ID 20-8156916