



## Gender Equity

We are eager to include all kids and families in the 18th Ward community, regardless of how they identify. As an inclusive organization, we hope to shine a light on some of the unique challenges girls and womxn face and the way bias influences how sports are structured, supported, and funded. As we reflect on the challenges for girls and womxn, we know that transgender, gender fluid, and gender non-conforming families and kids face even more barriers in sports and in life. We want to create a welcoming community and we are committed to learning how to best support everyone now and in the future.

Although we love sports, we believe many sports organizations either intentionally or subconsciously perpetuate gender inequality. We believe sports programs should invest the same amount of time, money and effort into their athletes regardless of gender identity. If we invest in our athletes at early ages, we believe we can disrupt the status quo. Here is what the data tells us about the current state of affairs:

- Girls drop out of sports at twice the rate of boys by age 14.<sup>1</sup>
- 26% of youth head coaches are female.<sup>2</sup>
- 40% of teen girls do not participate in sports compared to 25% of teen boys.<sup>3</sup>

**Opportunity:** We believe young athletes benefit from the social, emotional, and physical benefits of team sports. We believe children benefit socially by playing with each other and that is true no matter how they identify. All our programs and those of our partners must provide equal opportunity regardless of gender. When we analyze programs across the city and compare opportunities within the same age range and sport, we often see **at least three times as many boys' teams as girls' teams**. We often see more experienced coaches assigned to boys' teams. We also observe gender segregation as early as age five.

**Access:** While Title IX has increased opportunities for many athletes identifying as female, many athletes of color have been left behind. Our program is designed to expand access, particularly for girls of color, in two major ways. One, we eliminate barriers to participation, such as cost. We operate with a sliding scale participation fee model so that cost never excludes girls of color who are disproportionately affected by an economic system that institutionalizes racism. Two, we set clear diversity goals to ensure equitable coach and player representation. As data from the NCAA Demographics Database reveals, we are far from a place of equity in sports.

- 2% of head coaches and athletic directors in the NCAA are Black women.
- 5.3% of all female Division I soccer players are Black.
- 8.2% of all female Division I softball players are Black.

---

<sup>1</sup> Women's Sports Foundation

<sup>2</sup> Sports and Fitness Industry Association

<sup>3</sup> Zarrett, N., Veliz, P., & Sabo, D. 2018



- 21% of all female Division I student-athletes are Black.

We are committed to providing high-quality, low-cost and inclusive youth sports programs in New Orleans where everyone is welcome regardless of race, gender, income or neighborhood. We believe youth sports programs should be responsive to the needs of the community and welcoming to all. We are committed to ensuring that at least half of our participants and coaches identify as female.

Let's change the system together,  
The 18<sup>th</sup> Ward Coaches