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**NAMES FAMILY FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES YOUTH SPORTS PARTNERSHIP
WITH ASPEN INSTITUTE FOR STATE OF PLAY TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY**

Physical activity trends in the county have declined over the last decade, and the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed the landscape of sports and physical activity

Tacoma, WA, July 20, 2022 — A new partnership announced with the Aspen Institute Sports & Society Program will analyze the state of youth sports in Tacoma-Pierce County and will offer recommendations to grow access to quality sport options for all children. The report, *State of Play Tacoma-Pierce County*, will be a product of a year-long analysis examining how well adults in the region are serving youth through sports and physical activity, regardless of zip code or ability.

According to the 2021 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey, only 22% of sixth graders met the recommendations for 60 minutes of daily physical activity. This is a decrease from 26% who did not meet the standard in 2018 and 33% in 2008. Pierce County ranks 19th among all health outcomes out of 39 counties in Washington, making Pierce above average but well below the other two largest counties: King County (2nd) and Snohomish County (5th).

Guided by a task force of local leaders, *State of Play Tacoma-Pierce County* will address challenges and opportunities for more children to receive quality access to sports and play. The report will feature results from a survey of local youth, 40 findings on strengths and gaps in providing access to sports, and recommendations for improvements.

The partnership [was announced at the 2022 Project Play Summit](#) and the full report will be available in Fall 2023. Read the Aspen Institute's other community reports [here](#). *State of Play Tacoma-Pierce County* is the Aspen Institute's 12th community report.

The report is commissioned by the Names Family Foundation, which for 26 years has provided grants in Pierce County to nonprofit organizations that champion initiatives focused on sports, physical education, health and wellness. In 1996, Scott and Evelyn (Sis) Names started the Names Family Foundation as a way to combine their passions for philanthropy and athletics. Scott and Sis owned and managed an athletic store in Tacoma and saw firsthand the transformative effect that sports and play have on individuals and the community.

The Names Family Foundation Board of Directors has kept the mission alive by [providing grants to numerous recipients](#) throughout the Pierce County region – cumulatively granting over \$36 million to support sports, athletics and community wellness. *State of Play Tacoma-Pierce County* will offer data and strategies to help the community identify needs and initiatives – with a more targeted approach to funding projects.

“The Names Family Foundation is very invested in this community, funding opportunities for youth and families to be active and healthy,” said Patricia Shults, Executive Director of the Names Family Foundation. “After 26 years of grantmaking – and recognizing COVID-19’s significant impact to the landscape of sports and physical activity – now is a great time to convene a coalition of community partners to embark on this research project, *State of Play Tacoma-Pierce County*. We are honored to be co-hosting with Metro Parks Tacoma and over 20 other leaders whose work revolves around play, sports, recreation, and healthy communities.”

“Sports are valuable not only to a child’s physical well-being, but also as part of their social and emotional development. Metro Parks Tacoma is committed to the whole child and expanding access for all children to enjoy the life-enriching benefits that participation in sports provides,” said Shon Sylvia, Executive Director of Metro Parks Tacoma.

“Thanks to partners like the Names Family Foundation and other local leaders on the Aspen Institute’s research project, kids in our youth sports programs are developing important life skills, while enjoying physical activity and play. We appreciate the leadership of our philanthropic partners in supporting best practices to build healthy communities and to help improve access for every child.”

“Tacoma is a community with deep partnerships and opportunities around growing sports and physical activity for children,” said Tom Farrey, Sports & Society Program Executive Director at the Aspen Institute. “We are thrilled to be working with the Names Family Foundation to better understand the opportunities available to youth in Tacoma and Pierce County and work with community leaders to develop recommendations for growing access to quality sport experiences for all youth.”

The mission of the **Sports & Society Program** is to convene leaders, foster dialogue, and inspire solutions that help sport serve the public interest, with a focus on the development of healthy children and communities. Its signature initiative is Project Play, which develops, applies and shares knowledge that helps build healthy communities through sports. For more information, visit www.ProjectPlay.us.

The Aspen Institute is a global nonprofit organization committed to realizing a free, just, and equitable society. Founded in 1949, the Institute drives change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve the most important challenges facing the United States and the world. For more information, visit www.aspeninstitute.org/

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