

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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THE MIAMI POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE, INC. (PAL) PARTNERED WITH TARGET AND THE AETNA FOUNDATION RETURNS TO KICK-OFF ITS 2010 H.A.P.P.Y. PROGRAM



Wednesday, March 3, 2010- Miami, FL.- On Wednesday, March 24, 2010, the Miami Police Athletic League, Inc. (Miami PAL), sponsored by Target, and the Aetna Foundation, will once again kick-off an innovative ten-week health initiatives program for inner-city youth, focusing on making positive health and social choices. The kick-off will be held at Armbrister Park in Coconut Grove, located at 236 Grand Avenue, Miami, Florida 33133; and will begin at 5:00pm.

“ In 2009, our **H.A.P.P.Y.** Program was such a success. Miami PAL received a plethora of positive feedback about the program from the participants and their families, as well as from all of the sponsors, community partners, and contributors of the program; we had to bring the program back again.” says Ashaala S. Jenkins, Miami PAL Coordinator “ On a daily basis we continue to see an increase rate of child obesity, juvenile diabetes, high blood pressure and other heart-related health issues; as well as gun and gang violence, as well as drugs and alcohol use amongst youth in the communities that we serve. There is a need for this type of program, aimed at addressing topics and issues that will identify, educate, and prevent our kids and their families from succumbing to the consequences of poor health and social choices.”

The **H.A.P.P.Y** Program (Healthy Alternatives for Positive Promising Youth) is geared towards inner-city youth residing within the City of Miami. This ten week program will introduce a specialized curriculum focused on youth making healthy choices; supplemented with healthy snacks during each session. Throughout the program, City of Miami Police Officers, in conjunction with Miami PAL’s Youth Counselors, will aid and provide counsel for the **H.A.P.P.Y.** Program. In addition, a variety of special speakers, guests, trainers, and health care professionals will be invited to come out and present to the Miami PAL kids offering different topics and information that will allow them to make knowledgeable decisions when faced with adolescent challenges. They will learn about exercise, good nutrition, conflict resolution, teenage pregnancy, self esteem, HIV/AIDS/STDs prevention, and the avoidance of alcohol, drugs, gangs, and gun violence. Furthermore, Miami PAL youth will explore social choices, and decision making to help develop and sustain positive relationships; appropriately expressing their emotions and managing peer pressure stress.

If you or your organization will like to join efforts with Miami PAL as well as its supporting community partners and sponsors to make this 2010 **H.A.P.P.Y.** Program a success, please contact Ashaala S. Jenkins immediately by phone at (305) 603-6088 or by email at ashaala.jenkins@miami-police.org.

About Miami PAL: The Miami Police Athletic League (PAL) is a not-for-profit agency that provides an intensive recreational and educational program for youth, ages 7-17 years, to prevent excessive exposure to neighborhood negative influences. PAL encourages inner-city youth from elementary through high school, to utilize their free time after school and on weekends, developing skills in sports and gaining a deep appreciation for stretching their bodies and their minds. The goal of PAL is simple: “Filling Playgrounds, Not Prisons”. It is a unique opportunity for youth and Miami police officers to work together in a very positive manner.

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