

Initiative	Lost Boyz/ Lost Girlz
<p>Description</p>	<p>Chicago's South Shore neighbourhood ranks 8th among Chicago's 77 community areas for violent crime reports. In this neighbourhood, 31.5% of residents live below the poverty level and school-sponsored after-school programs are severely limited. Lost Boyz, Inc. (that now includes a girls' program: Lost Girlz) is the only sports-based youth development organization in the region specifically using baseball and softball to serve the particular needs of at-risk youth. It also offers opportunities for athletes to transition into a secondary program that addresses workforce readiness and helps participants earn income.</p> <p>Lost Boyz/Lost Girlz currently serve youths ages 4-24 from the Chicago South Shore neighbourhood. They target at-risk youth, specifically, those that have trouble with their academic performance or behaviour in and out of school. The aim is to decrease violence, improve the social and emotional conditions, and provide financial opportunities among the youth in Chicago's South Shore community.</p>
<p>Implementation</p>	<p>At Lost Boyz/Lost Girlz, they provide instruction, training, and the competition of organized baseball and softball to youths who are not as likely exposed to the game and its many disciplines. The platform is used to influence and impact lives, resulting in character development, positive output, and good decision making.</p> <p>Lost Boyz Inc. provides two programs throughout the year:</p> <p>MVP Youth Baseball & Softball – for boys and girls ages 4 to 18</p> <p>The MVP Program is divided into three components – Fall Ball, Winter Clinic, and Spring Training/League Play. This program is dedicated to developing positive social relationships, providing cultural and community enrichment, and to improving participants' physical health, and athletic and academic skills. By combining participation in team sports with tutoring and civic engagement, the participants experience positive social relationships and outcomes across many areas of their lives that enhance their individual interests, skills, and abilities.</p> <p>Successful Youth Leaders (SYL) – for young adults ages 15 through 24</p> <p>SYL focuses on cultivating community leaders by enhancing the developmental assets of youth aged 15 to 24. Recognizing this as a critical time in their advanced stage of development, participants are provided with professional instruction, supervision and financial compensation.</p>
<p>Impact</p>	<p>The project had a valuable impact in the community as it has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced youth violence using a sports-based youth development model. - Improved youth's physical health, athletic and academic skills. - Provided cultural and community enrichment. <p>Lost Boyz/ Lost Girlz has positively impacted vulnerable Chicago youth's lives through violence prevention</p> <p>Many youths from South Shore have benefitted from participating in the Lost Boyz/Girlz programs. By keeping young people involved in positive activities during times when they are most at risk (after school and during the summer), Lost Boyz has safeguarded children from potential gang involvement and victimization while providing personalized development techniques, coaching, and care for participants.</p>
<p>Lessons learnt</p>	<p>The close relationship between team members, coaches and individuals creates a safe space where everyone feels welcome. Lost Boyz/Lost Girlz recognises</p>

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	<p>the individual struggles of each member and caters their approach accordingly. E.g. someone who need trauma-sensitive coaching will be giving that. The program will soon be expanded with two future programs called MVP Fall Ball and Spring Training League which shows of create success.</p>
<p>Conclusion</p>	<p>Youth partaking in a sport-based youth development programme often gain benefits and life skills which can be used in their daily lives. The youth who participate in organized sports have significantly improved outcomes in discipline, self-respect, teamwork, healthy habits, emotion management, and healthy relationships with peers and authority figures. Lost Boyz/Lost Girlz can be considered a best practice due to it being unique in Chicago and using baseball/soft ball as a tool in a deprived area.</p>

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