

ACTION SPORTS KIDS FOUNDATION

MISSION

Action Sports Kids (ASK) Foundation is a non-profit in Long Beach, California dedicated to providing youth an alternative to the streets and gangs through sports, education and community involvement. Our efforts in creating the Long Beach Skate Park Program, considered one of the most successful in the country, has proven to lower crime, build self-esteem, keep kids in school and has saved the lives of many of our most at-risk youth. Our skate team is now more than 80 members, and applications continue to come in every day. Our success rate in keeping our team members off the streets, out of gangs, and in school is 100%

HISTORY

In 1996, Mike Donelon recognized a need for skate parks in Long Beach. Skateboarding continued to rise in popularity among youth, but there were simply no locations for kids to skate. This meant that kids were skating in neighborhoods, near businesses, and other locations, often leading to conflict with neighbors and serious accidents. ASK Founder/ Executive Director Mike Donelon, then a City Councilman, believed that if skaters were provided with an alternative venue to skate, they would take advantage of this opportunity.

While many opposed skate parks, believing they would lead to a rise in crime in the area, Mike championed them. And within three years after the opening of the Michael K. Green skate park in 2003, drug related incidents dropped 60.9%, violent crime dropped 29.3% and overall incidents dropped 22.8%. Calls for service dropped 23%.

Since 1996, Mike has been involved in opening eight skate parks in Long Beach. And calls to police and city council members have declined every step of the way. Skate parks have proven themselves to be a positive community influence that keep kids off the streets. While this began Mike's involvement with skaters, it was not the end.

In 2011, he founded the Action Sports Kids Foundation (ASK) to provide auxiliary services to at-risk youth and empower them through community involvement. ASK uses skate-boarding as an entry point to access at-risk youth. We meet kids where they are—the skate park—and provide them with opportunities to get involved in the community and help to improve it. We engage with at-risk youth and help them help the community. ASK is now used as a model across the country by the Tony Hawk Foundation and has consulted cities across the United States as they build similar programs.

WHO WE SERVE

The Action Sports Kids Foundation currently has more than 80 team members, ages 11-18 comprised of both genders and diverse ethnicity. Youth ages 11-18 are identified by our Executive Director, board members, and other team members at our skate parks in Long Beach.

Today's environment is filled with negative factors such as the recession, unemployment and budget cuts. Our at-risk youth in the community are often overlooked because of these issues. These kids already struggle with difficult social environments such as physical and mental abuse, violence, crime, substance abuse and poor academic performance. To cope, many of our youth turn to the streets and gangs. In Long Beach alone, there are approximately 25,000 at risk-youth.

While our actions are specific to Long Beach, we are followed on social media by youth across the USA and 15 different countries. We have ASK Team representatives in Mexico City and London, spreading a positive message of community involvement through skate boarding (parks)

WHAT WE DO

Our goal is to keep our kids off the streets and out of gangs by empowering them through community involvement. We have proven that as a community we can work together to help them in three major areas:

- Safe environments – create places where youth can focus on positive activities and not negative external influences.
- Activities – provide events, programs and other resources where youth can showcase their talents.
- Education – demonstrate the importance of school, diversity, and the life skills it teaches so that at-risk youth commit to acquiring an education.

Safe Environments

The ASK Foundation does not build skate parks, but we are a principal advocate for their creation. We work with the City of Long Beach and the Tony Hawk Foundation to identify opportunities for skate park creation. Our team members are also actively engaged in the planning and design process of the skate parks, giving them a sense of ownership and teaching them about the planning and permitting processes.

Activities

We keep our team members active, whether through skate tours (trips to different skate parks in Los Angeles) or community events. Our team members provide community service manpower for projects in their neighborhoods, get involved in community events, learn civic engagement by participating in city planning meetings, and take care of our skate parks through organized clean-ups. Team members also participate in ASK meetings.

In addition to providing opportunities for youth to get involved, ASK provides food, clothing, and equipment to our team members, nearly all of whom are unable to afford these things on their own.

Community service projects

Co-Sponsored LB Ronald McDonald House Car and Motorcycle Show with a sk8 and BMX demo

4th year hosting Autism in Long Beach Bully Free Zone Family Picnic

Mental Wellness 4 on 4 Basketball Tournament with EM3(Educated Men with Meaningful Messages) BHC, Good Eats Safe Streets

Provided sk8 and safety lessons to over 100 youth 11 and under and donating safety helmets to each kid

Sk8 LBCity Sk8 Contest with CSULB Communications Dept. benefiting the CSULB baseball team and semester project for the communication dept.

Sponsored 4 kids for the Albert Castro Memorial Scholarship at Woodward West. An action sports camp for one week.

Host skateboarding competitions. 4 in memory of kids we have lost through street accidents and gun violence.

Participated in a video with THF on the benefits of sk8 parks to inner city kids for CCTV-America, aired nationwide on PBS KCET-TV Full Frame segment

Community events

Hosted 14 kids at the LB Grand Prix

Hosted 7 kids at Formula Drift

Hosted kids at the Aquarium of the Pacific

Civic engagement

Attended community planning meetings on park master plans

Co-sponsored Tony Hawk Foundation Skate Park Development Summit with The California Endowment

Rode in MLK Peace and Unity parade with Grand Marshall Anitra Dempsey

Won a video contest sponsored by the Long Beach Convention Center and Visitor's Bureau about why Long Beach is a great place. The video was entirely filmed and edited by our youth.

Skate Park Cleanups

Monthly skate park clean-up program.

Direct service

Provided over 100 pair of shoes for low income youth

Provided food for 1000 low income youth

Developed an intern program

Education

Organized essay contest at Jefferson Middle School on what the City can do to improve your neighborhood and why you should wear safety equipment when riding bikes and skate boards.

Offering community service hours for students

Mentoring youth on the importance of education and staying in school.

SUPPORT

ASK has high levels of support from the Long Beach community, as well as skaters. We have the endorsement from the Office of the Mayor, Long Beach City Council, Long Beach Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine, Long Beach Parks and Recreation Commission, the Long Beach Unified School

District, the Long Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau, Long Beach Police Department, the Port of Long Beach and the Tony Hawk Foundation.

We have been fortunate to receive funding from:

The California Endowment

Port of Long Beach

Miller Foundation

Los Angeles County Social Program Discretionary Fund

BYN Mellon

Private donors
