

Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for the City of New York

Bridget G. Brennan, Special Narcotics Prosecutor

80 Centre Street, Sixth Floor
New York, NY 10013
212-815-0400, Gen
212-815-0440, Fax

**For Immediate Release
July 10, 2013**

Contacts:

Kati Cornell
Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Office
(212) 815-0525

Alana Sweeny
Police Athletic League
(212) 477-9450

Steven Reed
Bronx District Attorney's Office
(718) 590-2234

Paul J. Browne
New York Police Department
(646) 610-6700

PAL PLAYSTREET opens at Mott Playground in Morrisania section of the Bronx

BRIDGET G. BRENNAN, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, ALANA SWEENY, Executive Director of New York City's Police Athletic League, Bronx District Attorney ROBERT T. JOHNSON and New York City Police Commissioner RAYMOND W. KELLY announced today the opening of a Police Athletic League (PAL) PLAYSTREET at Mott Playground in the Morrisania section of the Bronx. The program provides area youth with recreational opportunities for a seven-week summer session.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony this morning marked the opening of the PAL PLAYSTREET. Financial support for the program is derived from narcotics trafficking proceeds obtained during criminal prosecutions by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor and the Bronx District Attorney's Office. The PLAYSTREET located at Mott Playground, a New York City Department of Parks and Recreation facility between 166th Street and 167th Street and Morris Avenue and College Avenue, officially began on July 8 and will run through August 23.

Young people ages 6 to 16 are invited to participate in the PAL PLAYSTREET, where they can join in a range of games, sports and other fun recreational activities, such as table games, cultural arts and basketball tournaments. During the weeks it is in session, the site will operate from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Beginning in the spring of 2011, the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Gang Unit, the Bronx District Attorney's Office, and the NYPD's 44th Precinct Field Intelligence Sergeant, Assistant Field Intelligence Officers and Strategic Enforcement Team investigated and prosecuted 41 members of three violent gangs: "Dub City," "WTG" and, most recently, "6 Wild." A total of 19 firearms were seized during these investigations. The NYPD has credited these investigations in part with reducing the area's crime rate.

Members of the three gangs carried out over three dozen shootings in two years of turf battles. Gang members sold narcotics and committed robberies in order to fund the purchase of communal firearms,

which were often carried by juveniles at the direction of gang leaders. Social media played a crucial role in the investigations, as gang members used Facebook, Instagram and other applications to communicate about criminal activity, recruit members, and post photographs of stolen money and goods.

Mott Playground falls within the area where 6 Wild operates. Last month, 11 members of 6 Wild were indicted in connection with a series of violent home invasion robberies. The gang targeted drug dealers in these robberies, but in several instances innocent victims were robbed and severely beaten instead.

By supporting PAL, the prosecutors' offices join in a cooperative effort to maintain the gains achieved when drug organizations are removed from a community, and to improve relationships between young people and law enforcement. The PLAYSTREET serves as a safe haven for youth who might otherwise be subjected to gang recruitment and other criminal activity, including violence and drug dealing. It is the result of a successful collaboration between law enforcement, PAL, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, the New York City Department of Education, and community members dedicated to protecting the safety of residents and improving the quality of life for young people.

New York City's Police Athletic League is the first, finest and largest civilian-run PAL in the country. Founded in 1914, PAL provides recreational, educational, cultural and social activities to over 50,000 boys and girls annually. It is also the city's largest, independent, nonprofit youth organization.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor BRIDGET G. BRENNAN said, "I am glad that we are able to join with partners in the Bronx District Attorney's Office, Police Department and Police Athletic League to sponsor a PLAYSTREET for the young people in this neighborhood. We hope our efforts have contributed to creating a safe, secure environment for summer recreation."

PAL's Executive Director ALANA SWEENEY said, "Bridget Brennan and the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor have been creative in reclaiming the community, harmed by the drug dealers, for the benefit of its youth. This PLAYSTREET will be a safe haven for children that will allow them the freedom to play outdoors and experience the childhood that the drug dealers sought to destroy."

Bronx District Attorney ROBERT T. JOHNSON said, "Policing is essential to public safety but the importance of positive outlets and support for our young people cannot be overlooked. We thank the Police Athletic League, Special Narcotics Prosecutor, and the NYPD for continuing to place a focus on preventative measures."

Police Commissioner RAYMOND W. KELLY said, "The annual opening of the Police Athletic League's Play Streets program is a summer tradition that's almost 100 years in the making. This year, the PAL added a program that teaches young people safe biking. We also added a soccer clinic which will be taught by a retired NYPD lieutenant, one of many current and retired police officers PAL youth will meet over the summer. That's what the PAL is about - the police and young people, working together to make this city a better place for everyone. I also want to thank the staff of the PAL for the terrific work they do, especially Executive Director Alana Sweeny, President John Osborn and incomparable chairman Bob Morgenthau. I'd also like to thank Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget Brennan for her partnership and support of our efforts to stop young people from committing senseless street violence. Along with her prosecutors, NYPD detectives have developed cases which have saved lives, as well as resulted in the opening of PLAYSTREETs funded through narcotics trafficking proceeds."