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BUILDING SAFE & EQUITABLE COMMUNITIES: A GUIDE FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT THROUGH BOXING

ANGEL'S BOXING ACADEMY



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Overview

About Angels Boxing Academy

Angels Boxing Academy is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering youth and reducing violence in Lake County, Illinois. Serving the communities of Waukegan, North Chicago, Zion, and Park City, our academy provides structured boxing programs that instill discipline, build confidence, and foster resilience in young people.

Our mission goes beyond the ring—we create a safe haven where youth can channel their energy into positive growth while receiving mentorship, academic support, and life skills training. By integrating sports, education, and community engagement, we aim to break cycles of violence and provide pathways to a brighter future.



Why Boxing as a Violence Prevention Strategy?

Boxing is more than a sport—it's a tool for personal transformation. The discipline, structure, and mental fortitude required in boxing help young individuals develop self-control, perseverance, and respect. Our programs provide:

- A structured and safe environment for at-risk youth
- Positive role models and mentorship opportunities
- Emotional and physical outlets for stress and trauma
- Conflict resolution and leadership training

Our Commitment to Community Safety & Equity

Angels Boxing Academy operates with a core belief that every child, regardless of background, deserves access to safe spaces, supportive mentorship, and equitable opportunities. We focus on:

- **Free & Accessible Programs:** Ensuring that financial barriers do not prevent participation
- **Equity & Inclusion:** Offering specialized programs, including free boxing for children with Down syndrome and youth from underserved communities
- **Community Engagement:** Collaborating with local schools, organizations, and leaders to create a holistic support system for participants

Through our holistic approach, Angels Boxing Academy is not just training future athletes—we are shaping responsible leaders, strengthening families, and building a safer, more united community.

Six Key Principles of Angels Boxing Academy's Approach to Building Safe & Equitable Communities



1. Community-Led Research & Solution Building

At Angels Boxing Academy, we believe that the best solutions to violence and community challenges come from those who experience them firsthand. Our approach starts with community-led investigation and idea generation, where local residents, youth, and families help identify the key issues impacting their neighborhoods and co-create solutions.

We provide the tools, resources, and mentorship needed to assess local safety challenges, interpret relevant data, and develop strategic action plans that prioritize community needs.



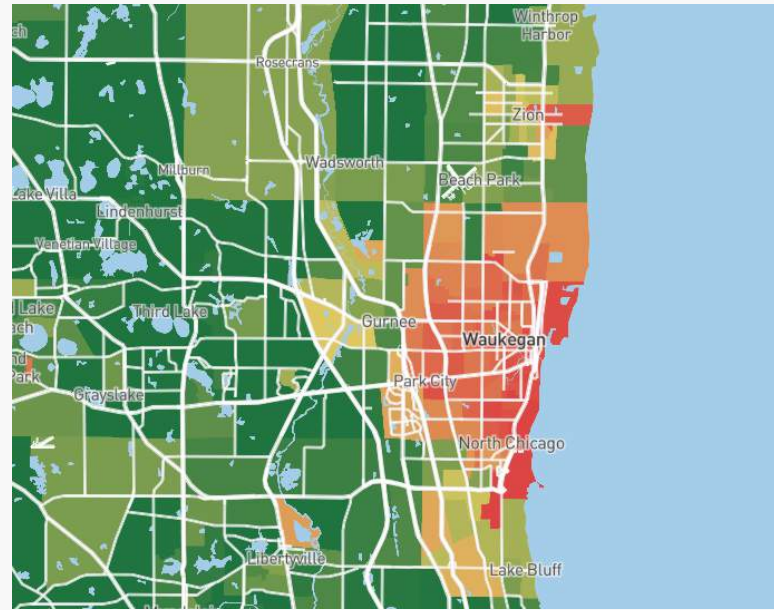
2. Empowering Community Voices & Leadership

Beyond just offering programs, we build community power by engaging residents in leadership roles. Our strategies elevate the voices of young people, parents, and justice-impacted individuals—those often left out of decision-making processes. Through mentorship programs, youth-led initiatives, and family support services, we foster strong resident networks that advocate for their needs and design community-driven solutions. Our role is to guide this process—helping gather data, coordinate interventions, and ensure that local organizations, agencies, and stakeholders work together to support resident-led efforts.



3. Rebuilding Trust Between Communities & Systems

Many of the communities we serve—Lake County, including Waukegan, North Chicago, Zion, and Park City—have faced generations of systemic neglect, racial injustice, and over-policing. Instead of punitive measures that further alienate communities, we believe in restoring trust and partnership between residents and service providers, including local government and law enforcement. We advocate for collaborative, community-based safety strategies that address the root causes of violence while strengthening neighborhood trust, economic opportunity, and youth development programs.



4. Prioritizing Those Most Impacted by Violence & Disinvestment

Angels Boxing Academy is committed to investing in the individuals and neighborhoods most affected by violence, poverty, and systemic injustice. Our work is place-based and person-centered, ensuring that our programs directly serve those at the highest risk of violence and incarceration. We intentionally engage young people, returning citizens, and those historically marginalized to take leadership in solving community problems. By targeting locations that have seen high levels of violence and economic disinvestment, we ensure that resources, mentorship, and opportunities reach those who need them most.



5. Customizable & Adaptive Programming

We recognize that each community is unique, and the challenges facing one neighborhood may differ from another. What works today may need to evolve tomorrow. That's why our programs are flexible, responsive, and built to adapt to changing community needs. Whether through afterschool boxing and mentorship, free tutoring programs, self-defense workshops, or family fitness sessions, we ensure that our initiatives remain relevant and impactful. Our model is not a one-size-fits-all approach—it's a blueprint for empowering residents to develop and sustain their own community-driven solutions.



6. A Commitment to Equity & Justice

At the heart of our work is a commitment to equity, inclusion, and social justice. We acknowledge that systems meant to ensure safety have historically marginalized communities of color, and we work to challenge and change these structures. Safety should never come at the expense of justice. That's why we focus on preventative, restorative, and community-centered solutions that prioritize healing over punishment, opportunities over incarceration, and empowerment over oppression.

Through these six key principles, Angels Boxing Academy is not just creating fighters—we are building stronger, safer, and more resilient communities.



Transforming Communities Through Placekeeping

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At Angels Boxing Academy, we believe that safe communities are built, not policed.

Traditional crime reduction strategies often focus on enforcement rather than investment, leaving high-risk neighborhoods without the resources, spaces, and opportunities needed for long-term safety and growth. Our approach centers on placekeeping—ensuring that public spaces in Lake County, including Waukegan, North Chicago, Zion, and Park City—are welcoming, accessible, and supportive of community well-being.

Rather than allowing crime and neglect to define these spaces, we work to reclaim and revitalize them through youth engagement, beautification efforts, economic support, and community-building activities. Placekeeping is about more than just aesthetics—it's about empowering residents to take ownership of their community, ensuring that spaces reflect the needs, culture, and aspirations of the people who live there.

Community Revitalization Through Boxing & Engagement

Angels Boxing Academy is more than just a gym—it is a hub for community transformation. By activating neglected spaces with youth programming, mentorship, and neighborhood events, we help foster a sense of belonging, pride, and public safety. Our initiatives include:

- **Boxing in the Park:** Free outdoor boxing and fitness sessions in underutilized public spaces to promote positive community interaction.
- **Neighborhood Cleanup & Beautification Projects:** Engaging youth in improving public spaces, from mural painting to community gardening.
- **Small Business & Youth Entrepreneurship Support:** Connecting young people with job training, financial literacy, and business mentorship to strengthen the local economy.
- **Community Events & Festivals:** Organizing public gatherings to activate spaces, strengthen relationships, and celebrate local culture.

Preventing Violence Through Boxing & Community Engagement



Preventing Violence Through Boxing & Community Engagement

At Angels Boxing Academy, we believe violence prevention starts before conflicts arise. Our programs provide mentorship, structured boxing training, leadership development, and conflict resolution to equip youth with the tools to de-escalate tensions, build self-discipline, and foster a culture of peace.

Engaging Those Most Affected by Violence

We actively support youth impacted by gun violence, gang activity, and incarceration by offering them a safe space to grow and develop life skills. Our approach includes:

- ✓ Mentorship & Coaching – Providing guidance and positive role models.
- ✓ Violence Interruption & Mediation – Teaching de-escalation techniques.
- ✓ Gun Violence Prevention Advocacy – Educating youth and promoting nonviolence.
- ✓ Healing & Community Response – Offering trauma-informed support and restorative justice.

Reducing Street Violence Through Positive Engagement

Inspired by Chicago CRED, which reduces gun violence through outreach and mentorship, Angels Boxing Academy serves as a frontline force for violence prevention in Lake County, including Waukegan, North Chicago, Zion, and Park City. Our gym is more than a training space—it's a safe haven where youth find purpose, discipline, and opportunity. Through mentorship, skill-building, and community action, we break cycles of violence and create safer, stronger communities.



Economic Empowerment Through Boxing & Community Investment

At Angels Boxing Academy, we recognize that true community safety is intertwined with economic opportunity. Decades of research have shown that poverty, unemployment, and systemic racism are deeply linked to violence and crime. That's why our mission goes beyond boxing—we actively work to empower youth, support local businesses, and create economic opportunities that uplift the communities of Lake County, including Waukegan, North Chicago, Zion, and Park City.

Economic Impact & Youth Empowerment

Similar to initiatives like the Community Wealth Building program in Chicago, which disrupts traditional economic development by placing power and resources into the hands of the community, Angels Boxing Academy is creating opportunities in Lake County. Through our programs, we:

- Provide paid leadership and mentorship opportunities for youth participants.
- Connect young people to internships and job opportunities that align with their passions.
- Support local businesses through community partnerships, sponsorships, and events.
- Help young entrepreneurs launch business ideas and develop financial independence.



Economic justice is violence prevention. When young people and families have access to stable incomes, safe spaces, and opportunities for growth, they are less likely to turn to violence or be caught in cycles of poverty and incarceration. At Angels Boxing Academy, we are not just training fighters—we are building future business owners, leaders, and changemakers who will strengthen our community for generations to come.



Empowering & Listening to Young People

At Angels Boxing Academy, we recognize that young people are often seen as the problem when, in reality, they hold the greatest insight into why violence happens and how to stop it. Too often, they are excluded from public safety conversations, despite being the most affected by criminalization, victimization, and systemic challenges. We center youth voices in our violence prevention efforts, giving them opportunities to lead, grow, and shape their own futures. Through mentorship, economic empowerment, civic leadership, and entrepreneurial support, we ensure that young people are not just participants but drivers of change in their communities.

Focusing on Youth Leadership & Opportunity

Each year, Angels Boxing Academy serves hundreds of young people by providing:

- ✓ Leadership & Civic Engagement – Encouraging youth to take active roles in shaping their communities.
- ✓ Paid Internship & Job Training Programs – Connecting youth with financial and career-building opportunities.
- ✓ Entrepreneurship & Creative Programs – Supporting young people in launching businesses and artistic projects.
- ✓ Mentorship & Peer Support – Helping youth build transformative relationships with mentors and positive role models.

By valuing, listening to, and investing in young people, we are building a future where they are empowered to lead, succeed, and create safer communities for themselves and others.

Our Community Partnerships & Collaborations

Angels Boxing Academy actively collaborates with schools, nonprofit organizations, and community groups to expand our impact and ensure young people receive holistic support beyond the gym. Some of our key partnerships include:

- ✓ Local Schools & Afterschool Programs – Providing students with mentorship, structured fitness training, and leadership development to keep them engaged and away from negative influences.
- ✓ Nonprofit Organizations – Working with youth-focused organizations, mental health providers, and community centers to address trauma, violence prevention, and personal development.
- ✓ City & Community Initiatives – Supporting movements like "Guns Down, Gloves Up" and other local efforts to promote peace through sports and positive engagement.
- ✓ Businesses & Sponsors – Partnering with local businesses, entrepreneurs, and donors to provide job training, scholarships, and career development opportunities for youth in our program.

2.27.23



Our Chess for Fighters program has expanded!

Mondays from 5 to 6pm (kids and youth only)

At Angel's Boxing Academy

402 S Lewis Ave, Waukegan, IL 60085

Tuesday from 4 to 5 pm (kids and youth only)

At North Chicago Public Library

2100 Argonne Dr, North Chicago, IL 60064

Thursday from 5 to 8pm (kids/ youth /adults)

At College Of Lake County

33 N Genesee St, Waukegan, IL 60085



Angel's Boxing Academy hosted a free class for youth from the National Association for Down Syndrome.



Where We Serve

At Angels Boxing Academy, we are dedicated to reducing violence, empowering youth, and strengthening communities throughout Lake County, Illinois. Our programs provide mentorship, economic opportunities, and community engagement to create safer, healthier neighborhoods.

We currently serve youth and families in:

- ✓ Waukegan
- ✓ North Chicago
- ✓ Zion
- ✓ Park City

Through partnerships with local organizations, schools, and businesses, we continue to expand our reach, ensuring that every young person has access to positive role models, leadership opportunities, and a safe space to grow.

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How Angels Boxing Academy Can Support Your Community


At Angels Boxing Academy, we are committed to working with local and national communities to build sustainable, community-driven safety solutions through youth empowerment, mentorship, and violence prevention initiatives.


Our team has extensive experience in:

- ✓ Youth Development & Violence Prevention – Providing structured boxing programs, mentorship, and leadership opportunities to keep youth engaged in positive activities.
- ✓ Community-Based Safety Strategies – Partnering with schools, local organizations, and law enforcement alternatives to create safer neighborhoods without relying on traditional punitive measures.
- ✓ Training & Technical Assistance – Offering workshops, coaching, and guidance on community engagement, conflict resolution, and trauma-informed interventions.
- ✓ Peer-to-Peer Learning & Resource Development – Creating educational materials, online training sessions, and mentorship networks to expand the impact of community-driven safety initiatives.

If you are interested in partnering with Angels Boxing Academy or learning how we can support your community's safety efforts, please contact us at:

 Email: Angel@angelsboxingacademy.org

 Website: www.angelsboxingacademy.org

 Location: Serving Lake County, including Waukegan, North Chicago, Zion, and Park City

Together, we can build stronger, safer communities through mentorship, opportunity, and empowerment.