



Rising Phoenix Sports Program

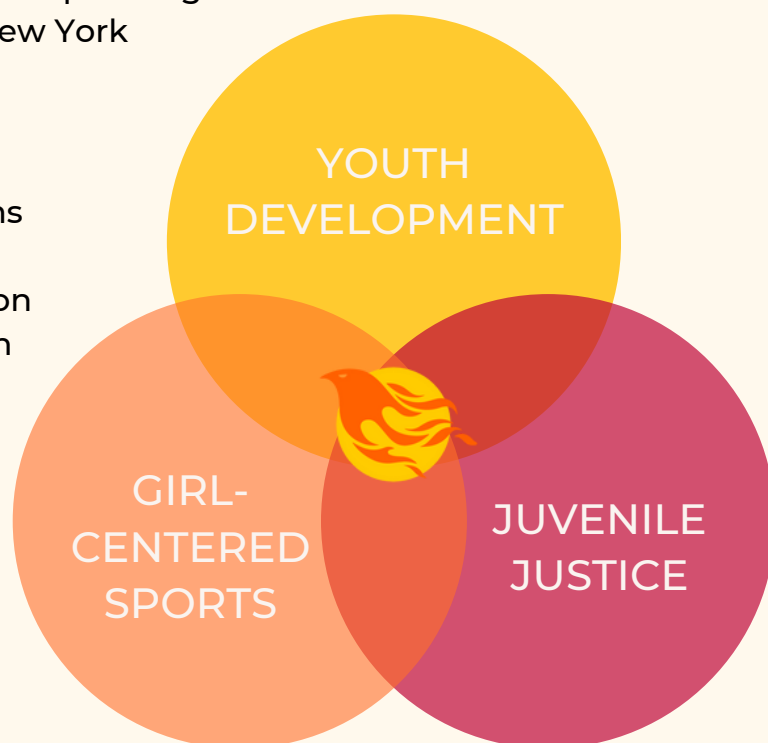
Rising Phoenix Sports Program is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Rochester, NY and operating in juvenile justice facilities across New York State.

Mission

Rising Phoenix Sports Program aims to use sports to reduce recidivism, retraumatization, and revictimization of girls and gender-expansive youth in juvenile detention centers.

Vision

We envision a world where all youth are seen and supported in their healing, allowing them to [#RiseUp](#) from adversity and reach their full potential.



The Program

Using a trauma-sensitive approach, our sports program engages girls and gender-expansive youth in activities that develop their leadership, improve their self-esteem, and aid them in healing from trauma that they have all-too-often faced. Over 80% of girls in juvenile detention centers have experienced violence or sexual abuse prior to their involvement in the justice system. This trauma is often directly related to the decisions they make that lead them to commit a criminal offense.

Research shows that sports can greatly support the healing of survivors, as well as support the development of youth physically, emotionally, and socially. Rising Phoenix Sports Program aims to build comfort around trying new things, while building on different athletic skills that are transferable across sports (i.e. being in an athletic stance, communication, spacing around a field/court, etc.).

Program Design

Rising Phoenix Sports Program offers weekly or twice-weekly sports practices to girls and gender-expansive youth in juvenile detention centers. In our program we:

Rotate the sport we play every 3-4 weeks

Base our gameplay and discussions on an SEL*-tied "Word of the Week"

Set a positive behavior code to limit put-downs and negativity

Use trauma-sensitive coaching techniques to foster a safe, empowering space

A key element of Rising Phoenix practices designed to boost the leadership development of our athletes is the **Assistant Coach of the Week**. This role rotates between residents on a weekly basis. Assistant Coach of the Week is responsible for leading warm-ups, setting up equipment, making teams, providing constructive feedback to the group, motivating their fellow teammates to play, and nominating the next Assistant Coach of the Week.

Program Goals

The youth in our program are able to reach a wide range of goals in our program. The more time they have to participate in our program, the higher level of goals they will achieve, building up from the Foundational level all the way to the Aspirational level.

Aspirational

- Youth develop life skills, confidence, and self-efficacy as protective factors that will limit their potential for recidivism, revictimization, and/or retraumatization.

Intermediate

- Youth develop skills in each of our Four Pillars (resilience, leadership, social well-being, and emotional well-being.)
- Youth make connections between lessons learned in sports and real life.

Foundational

- Youth have access to a fun, healthy outlet while building relationships with their fellow residents and staff members. (Even youth who experience our program for just one practice should be able to reach these goals.)



One thing I learned in this program is that I can **rise up** from any bad situation.

Quote from multiple residents at Hillbrook Juvenile Detention Center and Taberg Residential Center for Girls

This program makes me feel **happy every time** they're here.

Quote from resident at Hillbrook Juvenile Detention Center

This program makes me feel **cared about**.

Quote from resident at Taberg Residential Center for Girls

One thing I've learned in this program is to **never give up**.

Quote from resident at Taberg Residential Center for Girls

Key Insights / Program Highlights

- Most athletes have noted they enjoy the positive environment of the program.
- Sportsmanship, team skills, and sports skills were the biggest takeaways of the program for most athletes.
- When asked about what they don't like about the program, every athlete wrote "N/A" or "Nothing."
- All athletes enjoyed developing their leadership as "Assistant Coach of the Week."
- The majority of athletes only reported exercising on Fridays and Sundays (Rising Phoenix programming days).

100%

of respondents
like Rising Phoenix Sports Program.

100%

of respondents
look forward to Rising Phoenix every week.

Statistics are pulled from 2024 post-season surveys



Since 2022:

3

Partner Facilities

*Hillbrook Juvenile Detention Center,
Taberg Residential Center for Girls, and Harriet Tubman Residential Center*

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Sports Introduced

Soccer, Flag Football, Volleyball, Badminton, Basketball, Fitness, Yoga, Ultimate Frisbee, Kickball, Baseball, General Recreation

200+
Youth Served

220+

Practices

Featuring a word of the week, warm-ups, drills, and competitive scrimmages

4

Pillars of Growth

*Resilience
Leadership
Social Well-being
Emotional Well-being*

Partner Facilities

Hillbrook Juvenile Detention Center

*Secure juvenile detention facility
Syracuse, NY*

- Partner since June 2022
- Practices twice a week
- Two coaches, 1 intern
- Rotating youth "Coach of the Week"
- 1 female* unit (8 beds)
- ~40 youth served in 2024

Taberg Residential Center for Girls

*OCFS limited secure facility
Taberg, NY*

- Partner since June 2023
- Practice once a week
- One coach
- 2 female* units (12 beds each)
- ~50 youth served in 2024

Harriet Tubman Residential Center

*OCFS limited secure/secure facility
Syracuse, NY*

- Partner since January 2025
- Practices once a week
- Once coach
- Rotating youth "Coach of the Week"
- 2 female* units (12 beds each)