

## Changing the Conversation Around Youth Sports

The first quarter of 2023 saw the full launch of Cornerstone to the Western New York youth sports community. Through a series of in person meetings with grass roots organizations, and a major event keynoted by NHF Hall of Fame hockey player, Pat LaFontaine, organizations across all sports had the opportunity to engage in Cornerstone's Community Collaborations. For some organizations Cornerstone will work in harmony with existing coach training resources, and for others, Cornerstone will act as the center piece of their coach engagement programs and support effort.

- In January several YMCAs in the eight counties held coach collaboration introducing the value of Cornerstone in elevating the coaching and youth sport experience.
- The collaboration sessions highlighted the full range of tools available to use sport to build Social and Emotional Learning for youth and families.
- Coaches and organizations were introduced to tools offering pre - season, in season, and end of season support.



March saw Cornerstone introduced at a major community event:

- The spring Project Play WNY Community Conversation included Pat Lafontaine as the keynote speaker. Pat provided insight into hockey's Declaration of Principles (DOP).
- Pat highlighted the similarities between the DOP and Cornerstone, showing how each offered support for the development of life skills.
- The Cornerstone team delivered an introduction of Cornerstone to all attending organizations, coaches, and governing bodies.
- The collaboration session focused on the positive impact sports can have on the well-being of kids, families and indeed whole communities.
- Attendees were given insight into how Cornerstone can assist organizations to recover from the impact of the pandemic.



In April Cornerstone Director, Bridget Niland, was invited to present Cornerstone at Sports and Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) Team Sports Meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana

- Cornerstone was featured as part of the movement to reimagine the youth sport experience.
- The panel included, Roman Oben: Vice President, Football Development & Strategy, NFL, Nina Johnson-Pitt Senior Strategy Executive, Little League International and Izell Reese: CEO, RCX Sports
- Bridget shared insight into what, how and why of Cornerstone.

At each of these events the value of Cornerstone as a platform upon which to grow participation was highlighted.



## What's Next?

In June and July, Cornerstone will be working with the WNY Youth Football Alliance to host a Coach Collaboration session. Cornerstone is also set to work with the Kenan Center in Lockport. This summer, Cornerstone will launch its online scheduling software through which youth sport organizations can schedule their own league focused sessions. Individuals can also use the software to join monthly Cornerstone Collaborations. Fall launch of Cornerstone Mobile App.

