

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MORE THAN 1,000 ANNAPOLIS YOUTH REACHED AS PLAYANNAPOLIS EXPANDS LEADERSHIP

New board members join a growing community effort to make sports accessible to every child in Annapolis.

Annapolis, MD – PlayAnnapolis is pleased to announce that four new members have joined its Board of Directors: Deonte Ward, Amy Donovan, Ana Taylor, and Nancy Auslander. Each brings a deep commitment to Annapolis youth and a unique perspective that will help PlayAnnapolis continue expanding access to recreation and sports for all children in the city.

“We’ve built incredible momentum over the last three years, and I’m so excited to have Deonte, Amy, Ana, and Nancy joining us for what comes next,” said Emily Tomasini, Board President. “Each of them is already deeply invested in this community and in creating opportunities for kids. They bring different experiences and perspectives to the table, but they share our belief that every child in Annapolis should have the opportunity to play.”

Meet the New Board Members

Deonte Ward was born and raised in Annapolis, where he has lived in many of the city's subsidized housing communities. Having once been served by community leaders and activists, he now stands as one himself, teaching, mentoring, and creating programs for youth in the neighborhoods that shaped him. A living representation of Black Excellence, Deonte is committed to service, leadership, and empowering the next generation. He brings a powerful voice and a deep understanding of the families PlayAnnapolis serves.

Amy Donovan is an Annapolis resident and a Senior Account Manager at ShadowDragon, a provider of open-source intelligence and link analysis software. A longtime athlete and coach, she captained the 1996 Annapolis High School team to a State Championship before playing at James Madison University, where she helped lead the team to a Final Four appearance. She now coaches with Chesapeake Club Lacrosse. Amy brings both professional expertise and a coach's perspective on the value of youth sports to the community she calls home.

Ana Taylor is a Community Liaison and Language Interpreter at Tyler Heights Elementary and a strong advocate for local families. She is passionate about connecting families with resources and opportunities that help them thrive. Ana joined the PlayAnnapolis board because she believes every child should have the opportunity to play, grow, and be part of a team.

Nancy Auslander taught in Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland for nearly three decades, concentrating on special education. Known fondly as "Mrs. A.," she made her classroom a refuge for students with challenging backgrounds, focusing on building the

confidence they needed to overcome life's challenges. Nancy also serves on the Champions Board of Classroom Champions.

About PlayAnnapolis

PlayAnnapolis is an Annapolis-based nonprofit representing 21 youth sports organizations serving the City of Annapolis. Founded in 2023, PlayAnnapolis's mission is to inspire collaboration, build resources, and establish partnerships so ALL youth have access to recreation and sports year-round.

Guided by community and partner surveys, PlayAnnapolis works with existing organizations to address the three biggest barriers to participation: cost, transportation, and access to quality facilities. Its programs include scholarships that connect families to funding for partner organizations' programs, interscholastic sports leagues offered at local Title I schools, and advocacy for improved youth sports facilities. With support from a coalition of more than 60 community leaders, PlayAnnapolis has connected more than 1,000 Annapolis youth to scholarships and interscholastic sports, creating opportunities for kids across the city to get in the game, be part of a team, and experience all that comes with it.

For more information about PlayAnnapolis, visit playannapolis.org or contact info@playannapolis.org.

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