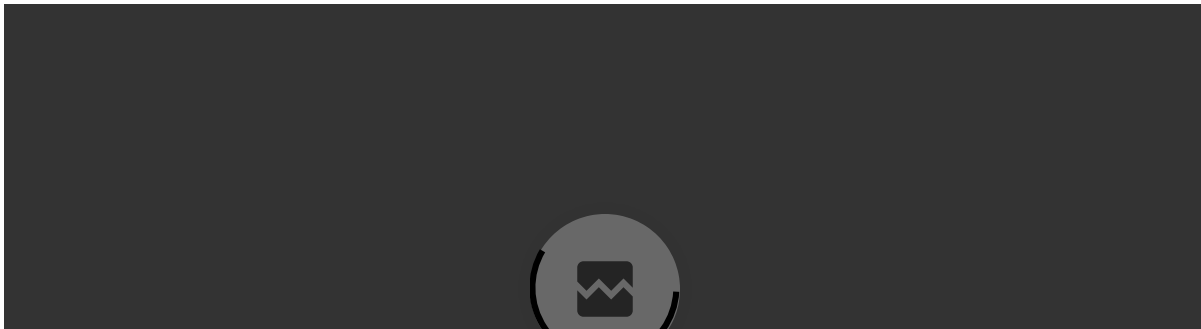




NEWS RELEASE

CHANGING LIVES ON AND OFF THE ICE: FIGURE SKATING IN HARLEM RECEIVES 75FOR75 SPORTS MATTER GRANT

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An ordinary day on the ice turned into a \$75,000 celebration for the young girls and staff at Figure Skating in Harlem. This past March the organization was surprised with a 75for75 Sports Matter Grant from The DICK'S Sporting Goods Foundation.

Figure Skating in Harlem student performing.

Figure Skating in Harlem is much more than skating; it's a safe space in an under-resourced community for young girls to achieve academic excellence and physical well-being. Founded in 1997, Figure Skating in Harlem helps its students build life skills like leadership, self-confidence and teamwork. The program also focuses on academics, spoken word and tutoring. Each day before lacing up their skates and hitting the ice, students have homework time and at least one academic session. They must maintain a B average or above in school to participate. "We really try to encourage academic excellence or at least academic proficiency so that we're cultivating really holistic children who will go off into the world and hopefully be leaders in their own capacity," said Ila Epperson, Assistant Director of Skating.

Ila knows the profound impact the organization can have on young girls firsthand. She started with Figure Skating in Harlem back in 2008 when she was just five years old. She stayed in the program through 2020, when she graduated high school. She returned as a coach for the 2021-2022 season and was promoted to the program's Assistant Director of Skating last July. "The biggest things I was able to take away from Figure Skating in Harlem

were my voice and my ability to operate throughout this world and feel grounded in myself," Ila said. "So, when I teach the kids, my number one thing is for them to feel grounded within themselves and feel like a leader."

Figure Skating in Harlem students hitting the ice.

Becky Petro, Manager of Charitable Giving at The DICK'S Foundation, first learned about Figure Skating in Harlem at a Beyond Sport conference last November. She met Alex Wasch, the organization's Vice President of Strategic Partnerships. The team sent a proposal for a \$25,000 grant, but as Becky and local Community Marketing Managers Brian Hagerman and Matt Catacchio learned more about the program and the different resources and opportunities it was providing for students, they knew The DICK'S Foundation could do even more. "We knew that they'd be a great candidate for 75for75," Becky said.

The 75for75 Sports Matter Grant Program was launched in March in support of DICK'S Sports Change Lives campaign and in honor of the company's 75th anniversary. The program was developed to provide 75 grants worth \$75,000 each to under-resourced youth sports programs across the country.

Becky and others from The DICK'S Foundation traveled to Harlem to deliver the Sports Matter Grant in March. It was a practice night. The girls had just put on their skates and went into the locker room. One of the girls had the grant letter in her coat pocket and asked their coach to read it aloud. "She read the letter in front of the girls, and they all screamed and chanted '75!'" Becky said.

"This funding will be tangible for both the students and staff," said Ila. "It will help open so many doors and give the kids so many opportunities."

To learn more and support the 75for75 Sports Matter Grant Program and The DICK'S Sporting Goods Foundation, visit www.sportsmatter.org.