

Shed full of roller skates launches teen's epic mission



Robbie Palmisano thinks every kid has the right to play sports. His mission to make sure every kid, no matter where they live or how much money they have, has access to sporting equipment was the basis for All Kids Should Play. VPC

Lauren Ready, USA TODAY 7:30 a.m. EDT October 27, 2015



(Photo: All Kids Should Play)

WASHINGTON – Robbie Palmisano is only 17 years old, but is already changing the lives of hundreds of school kids by organizing donated sporting equipment.

“It really left a personal mark on me seeing these kids' reactions to something that I may have taken for granted growing up,” said Palmisano, founder of *All Kids Should Play* (<http://www.allkidsshouldplay.org/home.html>), a non-profit organization that collects, recycles and redistributes new and used sports equipment. Palmisano redirects the sporting goods to recreation centers and youth groups serving low-income children in the Baltimore area. “The more times you try, the more you succeed, it's the successes that really excite me.”

It began in 2013 when Palmisano learned of 150 unused pairs of roller skates being housed in a local recreation center's shed. They were on their way to the dump until Palmisano stepped in. He found a group in Baltimore who was in dire need of sporting equipment. “We gave these kids about three dozen or so unwanted roller skates, and they were anything but unwanted when these kids caught sight of them,” remembers Palmisano.

From there, *All Kids Should Play* bloomed into an organization that ensures kids had what they needed to play. “Our mission is to help kids in our own backyards to encourage recognizing the need of kids only a couple miles away,” says Palmisano. “Many of the programs we are trying to push forward are finding local rec centers or local school communities in your own home town wherever you are, in America and beyond, and pinpointing that need and acting on it.”



Robbie Palmisano with inner city youth at Lakeland Recreation Center, whose reactions to roller skates would later inspire the creation of All Kids Should Play. (Photo: All Kids Should Play)

Palmisano is currently a freshman at [Duke University](http://www.duke.edu) and was among the 2015 winners of the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes (<http://barronprize.org/>), an honor awarded to 25 young leaders ages 8 to 18 years who "have made a significant positive impact on people, their communities and the environment."

"I hope it will inspire other people to find the need in their communities and try to make just a sliver of an impact in those communities," Palmisano said.

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