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LA Sparks Join LA County Effort to Bring Mentorship and Life Skills Programming to Youth in Juvenile Facilities

New partnership with DYD, the Probation Department, and the Twinning Project uses sports and mentorship to help young people build confidence, accountability, and pathways forward

LOS ANGELES, CA. — The Los Angeles County Department of Youth Development (DYD), in partnership with the Los Angeles County Probation Department (LACP), the WNBA's Los Angeles Sparks, and the internationally recognized Twinning Project, today announced the launch of a new sports-based mentorship and life skills initiative for youth housed at Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall and Secure Youth Treatment Facility (BJ Nidorf) in Sylmar and Campus Vernon Kilpatrick (CVK) in Malibu.

Beginning this month, young people at both facilities will participate in hands-on workshops focused on teamwork, leadership, emotional resilience, communication, and personal growth. The program combines sports-based coaching with mentorship opportunities designed to help youth build confidence, strengthen decision-making skills, and prepare for life beyond the juvenile justice system.

The initiative will operate in three cohorts at each facility, with each group receiving 35 hours of programming led in part by LA Sparks staff and mentors. Sparks players are also expected to visit the facilities to connect directly with youth and share their own experiences around discipline, perseverance, accountability, and overcoming adversity.

"Our goal is to invest in young people before they become defined by the worst moment in their lives," said David J. Carroll, Director of the [Department of Youth Development](#).

"Programs like this help youth see themselves differently. When young people are surrounded by positive mentors, structure, and opportunity, they are more likely to reconnect with their own potential and imagine a future beyond the system."

"Programs like this bring credible mentors, structure, teamwork, and positive engagement directly into our facilities," said Robert Arcos, Chief Deputy for [LACP](#). "When youth can connect with people who invest in them, encourage accountability, and help them build confidence and life skills, it can have a lasting impact on how they see themselves and their future. Expanding this type of programming at [BJ Nidorf](#) and [CVK](#) is an important part

of the cultural change and rehabilitation-focused approach we are continuing to build across our juvenile facilities.”

The Twinning Project, which has partnered with professional sports organizations and correctional facilities internationally, is launching its first Los Angeles-based basketball-focused collaboration through the initiative.

“Sport has a unique ability to break down barriers and create trust,” said Hilton Freund MBE, Director and Global CEO of the [Twining Project](#). “Young people respond when they feel seen, respected, and challenged to grow. This work is about helping them build confidence, develop skills, and reconnect with the idea that their future can look different from their past.”

“For years, our organizations shared a belief that sports and mentorship can create meaningful change for young people,” said [LA Sparks](#) Senior Vice President of Community & Social Impact, Natalie White. “This partnership is about helping youth feel seen, supported, and connected to a future full of possibility. Together, we hope to build confidence, strengthen well-being, and provide the encouragement and life skills young people need as they work toward successful reentry and long-term success.”

As part of LA County’s broader effort to transform its juvenile justice system into a model of care, accountability, and safety, this program combines the structural oversight and rehabilitation-focused approach of LACP with the equity-first developmental care of the Department of Youth Development. By further integrating the international expertise of the Twinning Project and the community leadership of LA Sparks, the initiative represents a major step forward in delivering long-term, community-based support, intervention, and opportunity for local youth.

More information about the LA County Department of Youth Development’s programs and resources can be found at [DYD.LA](#).

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