



## Atlas Cops & Kids Boxing Program Making difference in NYC



NEW YORK CITY (January 25, 2012) - When government funding ceased three years ago for the New York City Police Athletic League ("PAL") Cops & Kids Boxing program, The Dr. Theodore A. Atlas Foundation absorbed operational costs, expanded its reach into education, and today it is making life-changing differences for hundreds of inner-city youths between the ages of 10 and 21.

Certified by USA Boxing, the Atlas Cops & Kids Boxing Program has been a knockout of a success, providing a safe place for city kids to go after school. Members not only learn how to box, some developing into team members for competitive tournaments like the famed Daily News Golden Gloves, but also build camaraderie, discipline, self-esteem and character.

The program now has gyms at Park Hill in Staten Island, where 2012 U.S. Olympic Boxing Team member Marcus Browne developed his skills, and Flatbush Gardens in Brooklyn with more gyms soon opening in Brownsville and Berry Houses in Staten Island, as well as future plans to open gyms in the Bronx, Manhattan and Queens.

The Dr. Atlas Foundation, a non-profit organization founded by renowned boxing trainer and television analyst Teddy Atlas in his father's memory, currently leases gym space for \$1.00 a year for its Brooklyn and Staten Island locations. Operational costs, however, are approximately \$50,000 for each gym, including equipment, computers, teachers, coaches, etc.

Unlike other charitable organizations that may keep up to 80-percent of funds for expenses and administrative fees, nearly 100-percent of all monies raised by the Dr. Atlas Foundation go directly to needy families and individuals. Fundraising, however, especially during today's strained economic times, simply isn't enough anymore. Sponsorships, corporate and individual, and public donations are desperately needed to continue The Foundation's invaluable community work. "During the past 15 years," Teddy said, "the Dr. Atlas Foundation has given millions of dollars directly to people in need. The money may go towards cancer treatment, medical expenses not covered by insurance, medical equipment, Christmas presents for kids, and many other ways to help sick children and families. Other organizations claim that monies raised go toward research, but the future is now for people in need. We get calls every day from people in need, many of whom were directed to us from these other organizations. Our programs are getting real results."

The Atlas Cops & Kids Boxing Program offers much more than learning the sweet science and demands strict membership requirements. Each gym has an academic learning center and all gym members are subject to a review of their report cards and adherence to a set of rules established for proper behavior and appearance.



"The boxing program is needed for wayward kids with little or no direction," Atlas continued. "Our gyms give them a place to go for hope; building confidence and making them feel better about themselves. They get the tools there that they need to grow-up and become productive people. It is an important, valuable alternative to violence, crime and drugs. That's what boxing does like no other sport. It helps kids find themselves. Not only do they discover things that they didn't know were available to them, they gain pride and confidence in themselves. Our program is a platform for them to have dignity. The Dr. Atlas Foundation has been helping needy people with medical expenses, relocation assistance, and for other areas like that. But violence is a sickness and we're helping to prevent that with our gyms. I agreed to absorb the boxing program with a twist - education components had to be part of it. We established behavioral rules and conduct with disciplinary consequences. The kids have to keep their grades up if they want to train. Pat Russo did a great job as the PAL boxing program director and he's continuing to do a great job as the director of our program."

Russo proudly and happily remains in charge today. "I couldn't walk away from these kids after 20 years as the PAL gyms director," Russo explained. "I'd known Teddy for years and called him saying we had seven gyms and 1000 kids who were going to be turned out in the streets. Teddy

saw this as preventative in terms of sickness, crime activity and drugs. We always taught the value of education and becoming a productive person, so this program fit into the Dr. Atlas Foundation organization.

"Kids want to be a part of something and we're providing a positive alternative to gangs and drug activity. People in power have a bias for some reason against boxing, but it costs about \$100,000 to incarcerate a teenager. It costs us \$50,000 a year to run one of these gyms, where we can guide 200 or more kids and keep them out of jail. There are a lot of one-parent kids here who don't really know what's out there for them. We had one kid who just entered the Police Academy. It's tough. They can't pay money to be here but there's no cost to help making a good kid into something for themselves. We're mentors. They really want discipline and it's really working."



Donations and sponsorships are needed to help fund the Atlas Cops & Kids Boxing Program. For more information go online to <http://www.dratlasfoundation.com/boxingclubs.html>

Here is a link to short video presentation about the Atlas Cops & Kids Boxing Program through the eyes of some of its members: [atlas video.nfl](http://atlasvideo.nfl). Also find this link featuring Olympic boxing hopeful Christina Cruz on The CBS Morning Show: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qb8BxWO5r4>.

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