



Our Story: Reviving the L.A. Watts Summer Games

Honoring Our Past, Building Our Future

In the summer of 1965, our community faced one of its most challenging moments when the Watts neighborhood erupted in civil unrest. From that pivotal moment in Los Angeles history, something extraordinary emerged: the L.A. Watts Summer Games. For decades, these games stood as a testament to the power of unity, athletic excellence, and community healing.

Then, the games faded away—a cherished tradition lost to time and changing priorities.

Today, we stand at another crossroads. Our youth need positive outlets. Our communities need connections. Our neighborhoods need to celebrate their strengths rather than be defined by their struggles. This is why we are reviving the L.A. Watts Summer Games—not just as a nod to history, but as a vital force for our present and future.

Why Now?

The timing couldn't be more crucial. In an era where screen time dominates youth activities and neighborhood connections have weakened, the Games offer something irreplaceable: real human connection through the universal language of sport. We're reviving these Games because:

- **Our youth deserve platforms for excellence** where they can showcase their talents, develop discipline, and build character through healthy competition
- **Our communities need healing spaces** where differences dissolve in the shared experience of athletic celebration

- **Our neighborhoods need economic vitality** that comes with hosting events that draw visitors and spotlight local businesses
- **Our elders need to pass the torch** of community traditions to a new generation who will carry them forward
- **Our city needs reminders** that our strength lies in our diversity, our resilience, and our ability to come together

The Legacy We're Building Upon

The original L.A. Watts Summer Games emerged as a response to crisis—a way to channel energy into positive competition rather than conflict. Those Games became the largest high school athletic competition in the country, bringing together youth from all backgrounds in a celebration of athletic excellence.

We honor that legacy by building something new that carries the same spirit. The revived Games will maintain the focus on youth athletics while expanding to include:

- Cultural celebrations highlighting the rich diversity of our neighborhoods
- Career and college preparation workshops for participating athletes
- Community health initiatives promoting wellness beyond the competition
- Economic opportunity fairs connecting local businesses with residents
- Intergenerational mentoring programs pairing former athletes with today's youth

More Than Games—A Movement

What we're reviving isn't just a sporting event. It's a movement that recognizes the transformative power of community-centered athletics. The L.A. Watts Summer Games represent:

- **Unity** across neighborhoods that too often remain disconnected
- **Opportunity** for youth who need positive pathways to success
- **Recognition** of athletic excellence in communities whose achievements often go uncelebrated
- **Economic revitalization** through event-based tourism and local business support
- **Hope** that we can build on our shared history to create a brighter collective future

Join Us

The revival of the L.A. Watts Summer Games isn't the work of any single person or organization. It's a collective effort requiring the support, energy, and commitment of our entire community. Whether you're a former Games participant, a business owner, a coach, a parent, or simply someone who believes in the power of community athletics—we need you.

Together, we're not just reviving games. We're rekindling a spirit of possibility that says our communities can define their own narratives. We're writing the next chapter in a powerful story that began decades ago and continues through each young athlete who will experience the pride of competition in the shadow of history.

This is our story. And it's still being written.

Sincerely,

Khalifa Bey

Khalifa Bey, Chair

L.A. Watts Summer Games

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