



# Giving LACROSSE

NORTH ATLANTIC REGION

FUEL THE GROWTH ★ ENRICH THE EXPERIENCE ★ FIELD THE BEST NATIONAL TEAMS

## GROWING THE GAME, One Wall at a Time

BY PAUL OHANIAN

**THE ROBBINSVILLE LACROSSE ASSOCIATION** in Central New Jersey is a well-run youth organization that has steadily and effectively served its mission of helping local kids learn and enjoy the game since its launch in 2001.

After starting with two boys' teams and one girls' team in that first season, the RLA has now grown to nine teams and well over 200 boys and girls participants, from Pre-K through 8th grade. Over the years, hundreds of boys and girls have come through the program and advanced into high school play.

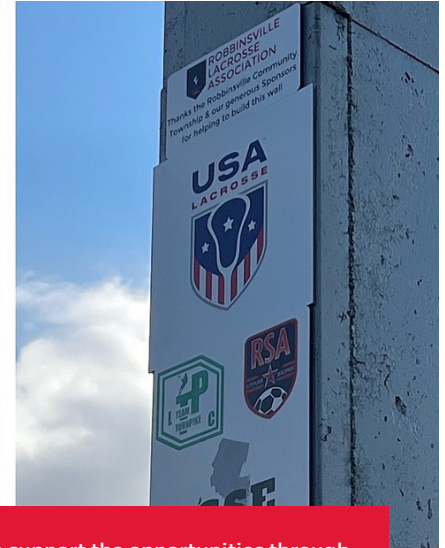
But despite its successes, the RLA lacked one noteworthy element, brought to the attention of vice-president Thomas Parrott by his 14-year-old daughter, Lynsey, a couple of years ago. They needed a new practice wall.

"She nudged me and it became my pet project," Parrott said. "I took up the cause because of her."

To be clear, the RLA already had two practice walls. One is located at the local high school, and one is at Blakely Park, where the RLA's boys' teams play their games. Wall practice for lacrosse players is universally recognized as a great way to work on hand-eye coordination, strengthen wrists, and develop lacrosse stick skills.

The void, as Lynsey pointed out, was the absence of a practice wall at Community Park, which is home to the RLA's girls' teams.

Parrott got to work to make the wall a reality. Fundraising and acquiring sponsorships became



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part of his new routine, adding to his primary role of overseeing the RLA's boys' division. He viewed the wall project as another way to validate the organization's commitment to all its members. Adding a third wall in the community would help tangibly demonstrate equal support for both boys' and girls' teams.

"We're really aiming for more than just winning games. We want everyone to feel included," Parrott said.

With Parrott spearheading the RLA's effort, donors were found and contractors were hired. He also served as liaison with the town's leadership to coordinate the construction process.

The total cost of the project came to about \$15,000, with 80-percent of that amount raised through sponsors and community donors. A grant from USA Lacrosse also helped to subsidize the effort.

"We were glad to support this project because, of course, we love the idea of having equity between boys and girls players, but also because of the great community service component that was involved," said Harry Jacobs, regional director at USA Lacrosse. "It was the right thing to do."

Once the structure was erected, the final touches, fittingly, came from Parrott.

"I painted it and seal coated it myself," Parrott said. "It was definitely a labor of love to give the girls' program the same tools that our boys have. That wall is always in use. It was all worth it."

▶ The USA Lacrosse Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that serves as the philanthropic arm of USA Lacrosse. The Foundation helps drive the three main pillars of the USA Lacrosse mission: 1) Fuel the growth; 2) Enrich the experience; 3) Field the best national teams. Supporting the foundation provides thousands of children across the country the opportunity to experience the gift of lacrosse. To learn more about the USA Lacrosse Foundation, please visit [usalacrosse.com/foundation](https://usalacrosse.com/foundation)

# National Scope, LOCAL IMPACT

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Each year, USA Lacrosse receives hundreds of applications for grants designed to **Fuel the Growth** of the game. Grants are available for equipment, player clinics and financial support. The USA Lacrosse Foundation is committed to raising the dollars needed to fund as many of these grants as possible. Philanthropic support from members, partners, and friends is critical in providing these opportunities for players, coaches, and officials in every region across the country.

The **North Atlantic** region includes **New Jersey** and **New York (NYC & Long Island)**. Applications received during the 2023 grant cycle are currently being reviewed with award notifications going out later this year, which means there's still time to invest in the growth of the game in your own backyard!

Here is breakdown of the applications submitted from your region:

**19**

**Total Applications**

**13**

**Equipment Grants**

**5**

**Player Clinic Grants**

**1**

**Financial Grants**

**\$50,075**

**Total Retail Revenue**

**255**

**Total Girls Impacted**

**190**

**Total Boys Impacted**



The grant not only gave kids a new stick to keep, but the clinic instantly put them in a fun environment to get them excited about the game. Our youth participation is way up and we're reaching new neighborhoods. One parent shared, "Both my kids had a great time and couldn't put down the stick when they got home!"

**ROB FREUD**

Wall Lacrosse Club  
Wall Township, NJ