

JANELLE NEWBOLD  
FREELANCE WRITER | NONPROFIT STORYTELLING &  
STRATEGIC CONTENT

# A Place To Belong

## A Sample Impact Story

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WEEKLY  
REPORT

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When Jaden first walked into the community center, he moved like someone trying not to be seen. Hood pulled low, hands buried in his pockets, eyes fixed on the floor. At fourteen, he'd already learned how to make himself small — not from shyness, but survival.

School was a place where he always felt behind, always in trouble. Home was quiet; his mom worked double shifts to keep the lights on. Most afternoons, he wandered the streets or lingered at the bus stop until it felt late enough to go home.

The first time a youth mentor tossed him a basketball and said, "You're on my team," Jaden froze. It had been a long time since anyone had wanted him anywhere. But he stayed. And the next day, he came back.

At first, it was for the game. Then for the snacks afterward. Then for the homework help that made math finally click. Slowly, he let his guard down — laughing during scrimmages, asking for help with essays, starting to believe he might actually belong.

By year's end, Jaden wasn't just showing up. He was leading warm-ups, helping younger kids with drills, and volunteering to speak at the center's community night. His math grade jumped by more than twenty points. But the real change wasn't in the numbers — it was in the way he walked through the door: head high, smiling, shoulders loose. When asked what the program meant to him, Jaden didn't pause:

*"It's the first place where people expect me to be my best — and help me get there."*

For the donors who make programs like this possible, Jaden's story is proof that transformation often begins with something small: a ball, a safe space, and someone willing to say, "You're on my team."

# About & Contact

Janelle Newbold is a Toronto-based writer specializing in mission-driven storytelling for nonprofits, grassroots leaders, and changemakers. She blends empathy, strategy, and clarity to create writing that inspires action and builds trust.

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