



Soccer for Social Change . . . Leadership Beyond the Game

September 2011 Newsletter

GOAL! Starfinder's soccer, educational and personal development programs inspire young people from underserved communities to achieve success both on and off the field. Starfinder promotes youth leadership, a love of learning, the benefits of teamwork and the rewards of commitment and responsibility.

First Shot by Steve Baumann, President

In the 5th annual C.S. Mott Children's Hospital (Ann Arbor, Michigan) National Poll on Children's Health, adults rate drug abuse and childhood obesity as the top health concerns and "big problems" for children. The top ten concerns include: childhood obesity 33%, drug abuse 33%, smoking and tobacco use 25%, teen pregnancy 24%, bullying 24%, Internet safety 23%, stress 22%, alcohol abuse 20%, driving accidents 20%, and sexting 20%. As an organization committed to supporting the personal growth and development of young people, we are keenly aware of how these health issues have the potential to interrupt and side-track their aspirations. We are working diligently to make sure this doesn't happen.

We continue to revise and augment our soccer and nutrition activities to better deliver understanding about the relationship between physical activity, healthy eating, and obesity. We are hopeful that we will soon receive a grant that will enable us to include healthy snacks as part of every winter session. We never provide sugary drinks, and with our new water fountains we will also supply reusable water containers to our participants. We intend to "walk the walk" as part of our nutrition initiatives.

Drug, tobacco, and alcohol use is a topic we talk about and discuss with our Senior and Junior Leaders. The National Latino Health Organization at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine has been an important partner in providing compelling lessons and activities to our Senior Leaders about the deleterious effects of controlled substances. Their presentations are right on target for our participants and drive home the message in ways that connect with the audience.

For the past two years we have also leveraged the presence of our excellent computer lab to create activities and projects that use technology and the emerging social media. We discuss the proper and positive uses of technology and create a forum where participants can discuss the abuses they see happening online. This year we will be enhancing the use of Twitter and Facebook as the primary vehicles for communication with our Senior Leaders. I look forward to reporting on that effort as it gets underway.

We are confident that even faced with these tremendous community health concerns, young people at Starfinder will find both a safe harbor and a learning environment that helps strengthen them to resist and overcome the challenges they face.



Senior Leader boys in a health education session with a volunteer from NLHO.

Thank you Corporate Partners!!



See page 4 about becoming a Corporate Partner.

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Starfinder Foundation
4015 Main Street
Philadelphia, PA 19127
215-764-5410
www.starfinderfoundation.org

Program News

Starfinder Seniors Graduate

Class of 2011!!

On Friday, June 10, 2011, Corporate Partner Shire hosted a celebration for Starfinder's 18 graduating high school seniors. On this very special evening Starfinder seniors were joined by their families, friends, Starfinder's younger participants, Board members, and supporters to applaud their accomplishments. After a delicious dinner and mingling, remarks from Coach Brendan Grady, Senior Leaders Program Director Herb Kandeh, and Diego Gutierrez, Director of Scouting and Player Development for the Philadelphia Union, highlighted the sacrifices and commitment of these wonderful young people. The celebration ended with a video presentation created by Starfinder videographer Amy Rymer that featured comments and action shots of each graduating senior.



Graduation ceremony for Starfinder's Class of 2011

It is important for Starfinder to make graduation a special event and for us to highlight the accomplishments of these 18 young men and women because nearly 50% of their peers do not make it to high school graduation. Starfinder is eager to reinforce the commitment and hard work that each graduate has contributed over the years to reach the goal of high school graduation. We also want to celebrate their aspiration



President Stephen Baumann and Board Member George Hasenecz with Diego Gutierrez, Director of Scouting and Player Development for the Philadelphia Union,

to continue their education beyond high school and their dreams to get a college degree and become nurses, business leaders, teachers, and difference makers in their community. Starfinder is happy to announce that 16 of our graduating seniors are well on their way. These 16 graduates have been accepted to college in the fall while the remaining 2 continue to work on their college application process.

We wish our graduating seniors the best of luck in college and appreciate the leadership that they brought on a daily basis to the Starfinder program. We hope that they continue to think of Starfinder as their family and know that we welcome them back at any time with open arms. Congratulations and best of luck!!!

Sizzling Summer Programming: Senior Leaders Shine

Not heat, rain, hurricanes nor earthquakes can stifle the six weeks of the Starfinder Summer Program! With sites at Beverly Hills Middle School in Upper Darby, Germantown Boys and Girls Club in Germantown, Ziehler Park in Olney, and Girard College in North Philadelphia, each evening witnessed 100-150 participants enjoying soccer challenges and learning activities that stressed teambuilding, health and nutrition. With programming taking place twice a week for two hours each session, each participant benefitted from 24 hours of contact. Participants at our summer program sites are also participants we see during the winter at our site in Manayunk. With this continuity of contact we believe that over time we will see enhanced growth and development in the outcomes we strive for with each participant.

A critical element of our summer program is the leadership opportunities created for our Senior Leaders as they participate as paid interns assisting in program delivery at each site. Beginning in January, the Senior Leader Summer Interns start preparing for their roles as instructors and mentors. They develop skills in lesson planning, behavior management, and public speaking as they get ready to be role models for their young charges. Once the program begins, new lessons are learned as the interns face daily challenges and learn about time management, leadership, commitment, and problem solving. Being a positive role model is not easy, but it becomes easier when the Senior Leaders see how young participants look up to them as teachers and friends. The Starfinder Program is strengthened

greatly by the bonds that are created between our oldest and youngest participants.

Here are comments from our Summer Interns about their experiences.

"After just the first week of work I started to wonder how many of the problems I encountered while trying to manage a group of kids on a soccer field would prepare me for the challenges that I will inevitably encounter while in college and after I graduate." **Theresa**

"Sometimes we were forced to think outside the box when the current activity wasn't working. It sometimes works other times it turned out pretty bad." **Sammy**

"I liked the feeling of being looked up to or when I missed one day at camp for a football scrimmage, I like that the girls missed me. That feeling of being wanted makes me want to keep coaching. It's nice to know that someone looked up to you." **Nury**



Staff & Senior Leader interns at the Feltonville summer program site

(continued next page)

Sweden Is Sweet!

A lot of high level math is required for this computation, but the answer is fairly simple. When you add up 7,712 miles, 35,200 participants, 71 countries, 110 soccer fields and games with teams from Sweden, Norway, England and Guatemala, you can only get one answer: the experience of a lifetime!!!!

Made possible by generous support from Starfinder's Corporate Partner, SKF USA Inc., a group of seventeen U16 Senior Leaders was fortunate to be a part of this experience during the 2011 Gothia Cup in Gothenburg, Sweden. Placed in a tough group that saw the group winner make it all the way to the final against Brazil, Starfinder ended with a 1 win/3 loss record that was not indicative of the way they played. Each match saw improvement in team and individual play, and the boys learned a lot about what it takes to put together a team and not just compete, but get a result.

Off the field, the always ebullient and outgoing Starfinder representatives made new international friends with ease and were very popular holding sway and dominating on the futsal court in the courtyard of the school where they were housed. In addition to playing and watching games, the team also found time to travel to the Goteborg Archipelago, the Universeum, the nearby amusement park, and the evening discotheque.

Here is what the boys had to say about their trip:

"Going on this trip taught me many important things, and it has been a very positive experience for me. I learned to be responsible. Most of the time everyone had choices but it was up to each of us to be responsible and make the right choice." Elisua

"This trip also helped me build friendships with new people. It encourages youth to chase and never give up on their dreams. It taught us about the way other people from other countries live their life and their culture. Most important it helped me to always be friendly and give respect to all people." Emmanuel

"I would like to thank everyone who made this trip possible. Nick, Steve and Eddie are the greatest coaches and role models. They were amazing at keeping us in line, and we could not ask for anything more from them. Any adults who could live so closely with seventeen boys for an entire week and remain calm, cool and positive deserve a lot of credit and recognition!" Tim

"Before we knew it, our Swedish adventure was over and we were on our way home. Although we were sad to leave, we missed our families back home. However, we did not leave empty handed. We brought back with us great memories and stories that will last a lifetime." Matt

For links to news coverage of the trip and more photos, go to our website: <http://starfinderfoundation.org/starfinder-program/program-news.html>. (Scroll down to the article about Sweden.)



Clockwise from top left: The Starfinder team ready to depart at Philadelphia International Airport, Opening Ceremonies for the Gothia Cup, playing hard against Sweden, group photo with the team from Guatemala, thanking the referees.

(Sizzling Summer, continued)

"But all in all I thank Starfinder for the job this year because it gave me a sense of achievement and responsibility. I felt like an adult, and I'm looking forward to having this opportunity next year." Michael

"Through the course of the program I've learned that trying to teach a lesson to a group of kids is not the easiest thing in the world and you always have to have a plan B for EVERYTHING. After knowing what it feels like to be interrupted a million times, I've grown a new respect for my teachers so my new school year resolution is to pay attention and keep my mouth shut as much as possible." Imani

Doc Cousounis Award Recipients Announced!

Congratulations to **Erick Cerrada** and **Imani Richburg**, this summer's recipients of our Doc Cousounis Award.

This award honors Starfinder participants who exemplify the ideals that Doc Cousounis promoted throughout his life. Erick and Imani, through their work as 2011 Summer Interns, demonstrated a commitment to developing soccer through community service and consistently displayed Starfinder's core values of respect, teamwork, persistence, pride, integrity, and caring.

Soccer Girls Rule – Year One Report

Soccer Girls Rule, Starfinder's middle school girls program at Cooke Elementary and Hostos Charter Middle School, completed a very successful first year and will begin fall programming in late September. Year One activities culminated on June 23rd with a scavenger hunt around the city. With assistance from Senior Leader girls and instructors, SGR girls were divided into three groups then challenged to scour the city from the Art Museum to Old City to locate the answers to clues about historic Philadelphia. Each group documented its "finds" using a Flip video camera. The group then returned to Starfinder for lunch, followed by a variety of challenging mental and physical activities and friendly competitive events (such as a water balloon toss). Prizes were given out for the scavenger hunt and the other games. As hoped for, it was a fun and very physically active day.

The Year One evaluation was completed recently and we are happy to report that findings indicate positive results for the desired outcomes of the program activities.

Some findings include:

- although statistical significance was not reached, trends of improvement were documented in measures of self-esteem, self-image and athletic image, and
- the program positively affected participants' body centered issues, problem solving and leadership skills.

One 5th grade participant commented during a group interview "I used to think I was fat, but now I feel average. I feel stronger." Also, when asked if "seeing older girls and women play sports makes it easier for me to play sports," there was a significant increase in the number of positive responses after participation in the Soccer Girls Rule program.

We are heartened to know that being physically active produces more than sweat! Thanks to these and other valuable formative evaluation findings, we will continue to hone the program for Year Two.

Stay tuned for more news from Soccer Girls Rule. Be One!

Thank you!!!

Sprucing up Starfinder

In July, Starfinder received a \$10,000 grant from The Charter Foundation to make some much needed capital improvements to its facility. First up and now totally operational: state-of-the-art water fountains on the mezzanine and field levels, replacing ancient, poorly functioning fountains. Besides providing chilled, filtered water, the new fountains make it easy to fill personal water containers and thus reduce the use of plastic throw-away bottles. The counters on each fountain show that total water consumption already equals more than 2,300 disposable bottles!



Out with the old...



.....in with the new!



Disposable bottle counter

Other improvements include the installation of new, more durable flooring on the main entrance stairs and landings and a new air conditioning unit. The new flooring, which replaced worn out carpeting, looks great and is easier to clean. A new energy efficient air conditioning unit in the computer lab will do a better job of cooling off all the hard working young brains and CPUs who fill the lab in the hottest months.

Coming this fall: all overhead fluorescent light fixtures will be replaced with more efficient lighting that will be brighter, last longer and bring down our electric bill.

Many thanks to The Charter Foundation for making Starfinder a greener and more cost effective organization!

Become a Corporate Partner

Would your company like to support a great cause and receive positive public exposure? Starfinder's Corporate Partners Program provides the perfect opportunity. Our corporate partners enjoy such benefits as public recognition on our website, in our facility, and through other media; and opportunities to meet our program participants. For more information, please contact Steve Baumann, President & CEO, at 215-536-7631 or steve@starfinderfoundation.org.

Please Support Starfinder!

Like what you see? Please help us continue to provide quality soccer, educational, and personal development programs to underserved youth.

Make a secure donation online at: OR **Mail your gift to:**

www.starfinderfoundation.org

(Click the Donate button.)

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All donations are tax-deductable.

Thank you!!



THANK YOU to all the donors and funders who supported Starfinder from July, 2010, through June, 2011. You helped make last year a big success!...

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