



Spring 2016 Newsletter

Soccer for Social Change ... Leadership Beyond the Game

Home Turf: Starfinder in Action

My Starfinder Family, My Starfinder Home *By Fernando, Senior Leader*

A home is defined to be a dwelling place, together with the family, that offers security and happiness. I believe a home does not have to be a place; you can find comfort, security and happiness within a person. This is what I discovered in my Starfinder teammates and coaches. The amazing people at Starfinder have become more than just teammates, coaches or friends. They have become family.



My Starfinder family is the reason why this soccer facility has become more than just an enjoyable place to play soccer at and be educated. Starfinder is where I developed as a person, soccer player, and a student. Every week I learn something new about soccer or even a new vocabulary word, but most importantly I learn how to become a better family member. I had never met so many supportive people in one place before. During our Winter League at Starfinder we had six different Starfinder teams and other high school or club teams outside of Starfinder.

I will never forget the other Starfinder teams cheering me, calling my name every time I scored against an outside team. Starfinder has given many memories, but most important this facility has become my home. It's where I have found the comfort and security a person needs to achieve happiness.

College Exposure: Real Talk about College from Starfinder Alumni

Getting into college – and thriving once you get there – can be tricky for any student, but it's especially challenging if your parents didn't go to college. This is the experience most Starfinder kids have, which is why we've focused so much more attention on college exposure over the past few years.



One of the most important ways Starfinder kids learn about college is by talking to Starfinder alumni who now go to places like Penn State (branch campuses and Main Campus), Community College of Philadelphia, and Temple. Recently, eight Starfinder alumni who go to these schools shared some "real talk" – everything from avoiding the freshman 15 to choosing the right classes to finding a quiet place to study.

Kids take it seriously when their peers tell them that college is tougher than high school.

Like Halimah says, *"I learned from the Alumni not to procrastinate, to get everything done on time, and to attend class. Don't skip!"*



We're on Facebook! Be sure to follow us for updates on our Senior Leaders, events and more! Just search for 'Starfinder Foundation'!

Home Turf: Starfinder in Action

Friendly Competition - Starfinder's Winter League

We can all relate to the thrill of competition – and the latent power we find when our teammates are cheering us on. That's why Starfinder was home to a Youth Winter League this year. Teams from George Washington Carver High School of Engineering and Science, Fairmount Soccer Association, Kensington Soccer Club, Germantown Friends School and Central joined Fernando and his Starfinder teammates at our Manayunk soccer facility, which is one of just a handful of places to play indoor soccer. Sure, it's a little chilly for parents who watch their kids play from the mezzanine, but it beats sitting on snow-covered bleachers or feeling the direct impact of the winter wind chill.

The Youth Winter League gave every single Senior Leader an opportunity to compete as part of a team. Competition brought the program to another level of leadership – helping our youth learn how they respond to their mistakes and successes when there is something at stake. Every game, Starfinder's kids were challenged to bring their best self (in terms of athletics and character), and coaches were there to reinforce the behaviors that we value.

"... you shouldn't ever doubt yourself no matter what - because my team was the underdog of the league and then went on to make it to the semi-finals." -Bryan R.

Even parents from other teams noticed how carefully Starfinder's coaches helped our teams have the most powerful experience possible.

"My observation as a guest parent is that Starfinder staff care a lot about children learning life lessons through the soccer competition, rather than winning the soccer match."

-Ken Johnson (parent)

Starfinder's new status as an Associate Member of the Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Association (EPYSA) will help make league competition more common for our kids. It's been years since Starfinder has been able to take our players on the road, but EPYSA helped reduce league and player pass fees for the spring season, so expect Starfinder to be a more familiar face out in the soccer community.



Clockwise from bottom left:
Germantown Friends School
Girls Team, Germantown
Friends School Boys Team,
Starfinder G1 Team, Carver
High School of Engineering and
Science, Starfinder B3 Team



Beyond the Boundaries: Learning & Leading off the Field

Leaders Making Social Change Through Soccer - It's All Happening at Starfinder



(from left to right)
Samantha Swerdloff,
Senior Leaders Coordinator
and Facility Manager;

Katharine Cunningham,
Program Director, Leadership
Development & Assessment;

Jeanette Hibbs, Program Director,
Soccer & Staff Development

Starfinder's lead staff are wowing – and getting wowed by – soccer enthusiasts from across the region. We're especially delighted to announce that Jeanette (aka Nettie) Hibbs, Program Director for Soccer & Staff Development, is one of only twelve people to be **inducted into the Southeastern Pennsylvania Soccer Hall of Fame** this year. Nettie played semi-professional soccer for the Hampton Roads Piranhas and Philadelphia Liberty FC before she started coaching with Starfinder eight years ago. Nettie has worked with thousands of kids and dozens of coaches during that time – and we're certain every single one of them is better off because of her help.

Samantha Swerdloff, our Senior Leaders Coordinator, who also played semi-professional soccer and has her Advanced National Diploma from the National Soccer Coaches Association of America, won the **2015 Charlotte Moran Scholarship** for the great work she's done "to grow and develop the women's game." The National Soccer Coaches Association of America awarded the scholarship, which Samantha will use to earn her Premier Diploma, which is the next level of expertise.

Samantha, Nettie, and Katharine Cunningham, Program Director for Leadership Development & Assessment, are just back from the **Urban Soccer**

Symposium, three days of interactive workshops focused on youth-based soccer. The Symposium is always a just-right blend of "Oh good, we're already doing that!" and "We need to try that ASAP!" Since returning from this year's session, they've had a chance to integrate what they learned to help kids refocus and reenergize.

"One thing we brought back was the practice of doing a transition ritual to refocus and raise the energy level. After warm up and stretch, we bring everyone in as a group and do our REACH cheer. It's quick and simple, but it allows us to come together to remember the things we want to work on each day---Readiness, Empathy, Attitude, Communication, Hard Work."

The Urban Soccer Symposium always includes a visit to Capitol Hill to talk with legislators about soccer's positive impact. This has never been more important. Every great report about the positive social impact of youth sports (like February's Uncovering the Social Value of Sport) is matched by tales of shrinking budgets for sports (like March's Huffington Post piece The Crisis of Sports in Inner-City America).

Starfinder is proud to be part of the solution and appreciative of everyone who helps make it possible. You're really making a positive difference for kids that need it.



We're on Twitter! Our handle is @StarfinderFound!



On Instagram we are starfinderfoundation!

The Assist

The kids who call Starfinder home know soccer is a team effort – and they're also learning that life is a team effort. It's a lesson we teach them but it's also something they see every day when people and companies help us clean and fix up our indoor soccer field; much in the same way that city blocks come together for clean-up days.

Corporate Days of Caring



We're so appreciative of Brandywine Realty Trust employees (left), who removed two large dumpster-loads of overgrown vines, weeds, and debris from around our property, and Rebuilding Together Philadelphia volunteers (right), who painted the mezzanine walls and railings, installed shelves, replaced ceiling tiles and light bulbs and built wood casing around the field's I-beams.

Mitzvah and Service Projects

And it's not just companies. In fact, kids from other soccer clubs have also been helping out. **Zach Kades** from Lower Merion Soccer Club is working on a soccer clinic whose proceeds will go to Starfinder. It's Zach's bar mitzvah project, but he and his dad Howard both hope it will become an annual benefit project.

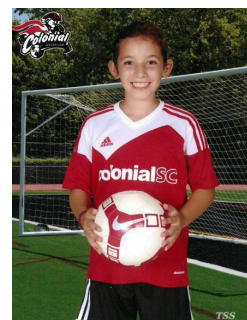


Leah Kaye just turned 13 and she's been playing soccer with the Colonial Soccer Club since she was just seven years old. For her bat mitzvah, she cleaned up the Colonial Soccer Club's storage area and donated more than 50 unused kits (jerseys, shorts, socks) – which means Starfinder's teens now have uniforms for the spring leagues. She didn't stop there, though. So far she's raised \$670 to

get the uniforms embroidered with Starfinder's logo and to support the teen program, and she's running a gear drive for cleats, shin-guards, and other equipment. Leah and her dad Adam both had great things to say about the experience.

Here's what Leah shared in a social media post to spread the word about the gear drive: "Playing soccer has been a passion of mine since I was 7 years old. I have been fortunate that my parents can buy me the necessary equipment like cleats and shin guards as I grow each year. I realize that not all young athletes are able to afford these necessities to play soccer. For my mitzvah project, I have chosen to collect cleats, shin guards and goalie equipment, as well as monetary donations to benefit Starfinder, a local organization that enhances the personal growth of underserved youth through soccer and learning experiences that engage, inspire, and motivate." Her dad thanked us for the opportunity and said: "It's been a nice opportunity for her and I to connect around something a bit more important than just playing the sport."

And **Devyn Cohen** is starting young. She's in fourth grade, so her bat mitzvah is several years away. But she wants to do her project over several years so it has the greatest possible impact, which is something her older sister did. She's still working on project ideas – maybe gear drives or fundraising to buy healthy snacks – that will help give Philadelphia's kids a chance to play the game she's loved since kindergarten.



The Assist

Volunteers

Contractor-turned-medical-student-hopeful, Mack Hardaker likes to fix things. Starfinder's corrugated blue walls caught Mack's attention at first sight and when he set out to learn more, he discovered Starfinder needed volunteers to fix and build things.



He likes using what he calls "these random skills" to make life easier for Starfinder staff so they can do what they do best – which is motivate and mentor the kids. "My role is to help make things a little bit easier, a little more comfortable, a little bit safer."

Donors & Sponsors

Thank you, Starfinder donors, for contributing \$22,204 in response to the year-end appeal. Youth in the Senior Leaders program have been enjoying better equipment, more tutoring hours, and college visits because of your support.

And thank you to the 107 players (from 12 corporate teams) who came out to the 2016 Starfinder Cup. Team Brandywine



may have taken home the Cup, but Starfinder's teens were the real winners thanks to the \$25,000 you raised. This covers the full cost of the intensive, seven-month program for 10 Senior Leaders. Starfinder's teens had a great time meeting all of you who played and came to watch. Thank you for giving them the chance to stretch their leadership wings during the event. And don't forget to mark your calendars for Starfinder Cup 2017: Saturday, March 4, 2017!

Thank You Corporate Partners!



To find out how your company can partner with Starfinder, contact Heidi Warren, Executive Director, at 215-779-9426 or heidi@starfinderfoundation.org

Ways to Give!

1 Make a secure donation online at:
www.starfinderfoundation.org
(Click the Donate button.)

2 Mail your contribution to:
Starfinder Foundation
4015 Main Street
Philadelphia, PA 19127

3 Give through United Way:
Our Donor Choice # is 14963.

All gifts are tax deductible. Questions? Please contact Kathy Stepkowitz at kathy@starfinderfoundation.org or 215-764-5410. Thank you!