



In this issue...

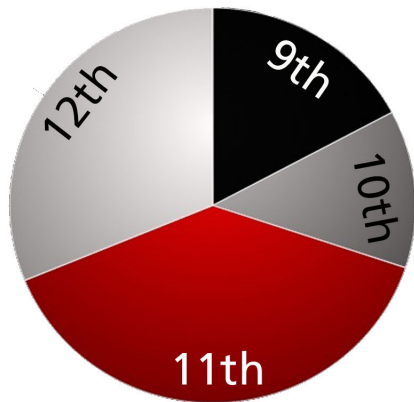


Winter 2015 Newsletter

Senior Leaders

by the numbers

93 TOTAL NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN PROGRAM



Grade Breakdown

Male: **63**
 Female: **30**
 1st timers: **37**
 Returners: **56**

168

TOTAL PROGRAM HOURS PER SENIOR LEADER THROUGHOUT YEAR
 Nov-June

6 HOURS/ WEEK **24** HOURS/ MONTH

Our participants make friends from all over the city (58 different zip codes!) AND all over the world: our teens come from **25** countries on **5** continents!



Getting Girls Going

AmeriCorps volunteer Casey Stewart recruited soccer-playing girls from all over the city

This Senior Leader Girls season is one for the Starfinder records! Coach Across America volunteer Casey Stewart led the charge in the fall to recruit girls to the Senior Leader Girls program. She visited high schools and soccer teams and challenged past participants to recruit new girls to the program.



"Growing up playing soccer taught me determination, teamwork, and respect. That's what we do at Starfinder," says Stewart. "The skills these girls learn here will serve them for the rest of their lives."



CC, a 10th grader, was one of the regular Senior Leaders last year who helped Coach Casey recruit new players. "Starfinder is like a family," CC said. "We encourage each other, give each other support, help with weaknesses, and build on strengths. We work together as a team despite our differences and backgrounds."

With 30 regular participants, this is the largest group of Senior Leaders Girls in program history, up from just eight last year. While most of the girls play for their school or a club team, for some this is their first soccer experience.

"Starfinder as a whole prides itself on diversity, and it's hard to be diverse when you aren't really representing half the population," says Stewart. "The girls bring a different aspect to the program. They help Starfinder be more well rounded and achieve parts of the mission it may have lacked before."

Fifty Years of Service to America, One Year of Service to Starfinder

Fifty years ago, President Lyndon Johnson set out to create a "domestic" Peace Corps to help alleviate poverty in America.

Johnson founded Volunteers in Service to America, or VISTA, in 1965, and in 1993 VISTA joined the AmeriCorps network of organizations. Each year, thousands of Americans commit to a year of service to combat problems facing America's communities.

We are excited that this long legacy of service is reaching Starfinder. This year, VISTA Ciara Trainor is helping increase our individual donor support while AmeriCorps volunteers Casey Stewart and Mykola Lyakhovolsky are working with our Senior Leaders program.

Thank you, Ciara, Casey, and Mykola for your service to Starfinder and our youth!

Soccer Diplomacy in the Americas

Program Director Katharine Cunningham and Starfinder participant Kadir Burton (age 15) are learning about soccer for social change all over the Americas!



With funding from SportsUnited (a program of the Department of State) and assistance from streetfootballworld, representatives of six organizations from the Americas are travelling the Western Hemisphere to visit each other's programs and share best practices in soccer-based youth development. The two-part exchange started with a South American tour in January.

The trip started in Granada, Nicaragua with a tour of Soccer Without Borders. Then Katharine, Kadir, and their peers were off to Bogota, Colombia to see Colombianitos and Tiempo de Juego.

It was an eye opening experience for Kadir.

"[Traveling means] you see things how they really are, not how it's advertised. You see what's really going on. You just see that not everything is positive," said Kadir. "Everybody is not just in paradise. It's like in the states: the reality is not always the American dream."



The U.S. half of the learning exchange will take place this spring. Starfinder will play host for three days before the group travels on to Street Soccer USA in New York and Soccer in the Streets in Atlanta.

For more information on the State Department's programs, visit exchanges.state.gov/sports. For trip updates, visit our Facebook page!



Kadir plays the girls from Soccer Without Borders

News

Where Are They Now?

Luc Toussaint is studying at West Chester University!



Left: Luc at the 2011 Starfinder graduation ceremony, waiting for his name to be called

Haitian-born Luc Toussaint was a member of Starfinder's Class of 2011, graduating from Upper Darby High School before going on to West Chester University. He's currently studying communications and philosophy, and wants to eventually work with kids, especially kids from outside the country, as a teacher or counselor.

Why did you start coming to Starfinder?

It was a place to play, especially when there was snow on the ground! I kept coming back because I had so much fun there. I noticed the cultural and racial diversities, and I really appreciated that. Everyone came together despite differences.

"You're going to fail sometimes. Just learn from it."

What's one great memory of your time at Starfinder?

Playing against the coaches! We would be split into teams and the coaches would form their own team. We thought we could take them but the coaches were good! Nettie was quick with her feet and Nick and Herb had powerful shots – it was definitely old school teaching new school.

How are the lessons you learned at Starfinder helping you now?

One of the things the coaches always taught us is that sometime no matter how good you are, there may be opportunities that will pass you. And it's OK as long as you keep moving and planning, and just do the best you can for next time. You're going to fail sometimes. Just learn from it.

Do you have any advice for the kids currently at Starfinder?

Practice does make perfect, so keep going at it. Also make friends while you're here, and be kind.

A New Classroom for a New Year

Welcome to the Pelé room!



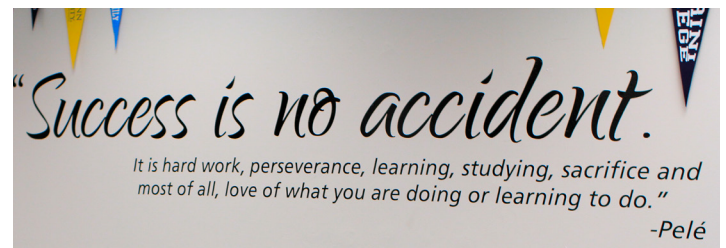
That's what we've named our computer lab, recently renovated with a grant from the McLean Contributionship! New equipment and a revamped space have given our kids a better learning environment.

Before:

After:



We've been using our new space for educational programs for our Senior Leaders, including tutoring and homework help. And a quote by the room's namesake reminds students what it takes to perform on and off the field:



Our Gratitude

Thank You from Our Polyglot Family!

Our Senior Leaders are a diverse bunch! Among our 93 participants, we have speakers of 19 languages! From Amharic to Chechen to Vietnamese, here are a few ways we can express our gratitude:



Thanks for the Lift, Guys!



We want to give a shout out to **Brandywine Realty Trust** and new volunteer **Mack Hardaker** for helping us spruce up our facility. Brandywine lent us a scissor lift while Mack lent his time to work on our insulation. Thanks!

YOU Made Programs Possible

We're gearing up for our community-based programs this spring, and it's thanks to YOU. With your help, we raised **\$54,719** during our fall appeal, enough to launch our community-based outreach programs this spring and prepare to expand them this fall.

We'd like to give a special thanks to **Dickie Fenimore/Radnor United** and **Jeremy Brodovsky**, who together raised **\$6,408** from **56** donors. This is enough to fund **nearly an entire program group**.

We're thrilled to bring soccer and mentoring to kids in their communities, and **we could not have done it without your support**.

Starfinder from a Student's View



Sallen Woewiyu (Starfinder '12) recently joined a group of alumni to talk to our current Senior Leaders about applying to and attending college. Sallen, a communications student at Eastern University, wrote to us after the visit to say what Starfinder meant to him:

Starfinder taught me a few specific lessons that I apply to my everyday life now. One of those things is unconditional love for people no matter their racial background, sexuality, or gender. I know this wasn't something that was always stated verbally but I could see how it was portrayed non-verbally from the staff that I was surrounded by and how they treated each other.

The second thing that Starfinder taught me was how to work hard for what I want in life. Through this, I learned to become an independent person and help others when they needed it. Those are things that helped me get this far in college.

I learned over the years that the path to success is never a straight line. There are ups and downs along the way and major setbacks but you have to get up and keep fighting for what you want.

Keep up the good work, Sallen!

Thank You Corporate Partners!



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