



Soccer for Social Change . . . Leadership Beyond the Game

Fall 2013 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.

Thank you Corporate Partners!!



First Shot by Heidi T. Warren, Executive Director

Physical Fitness Supports Learning



Starfinder has always been committed to helping children succeed both on and off the field. Our mission is to enhance the personal growth of underserved youth through soccer and learning experiences that engage, inspire, and motivate. Recent research confirms that soccer (and all vigorous exercise) can play a critical role in enhancing children's capacity to learn.

A recent study from researchers at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign found that children who are physically fit do better than their peers at absorbing and retaining new information. Children in the study were tested for aerobic fitness on a treadmill and then asked to perform difficult memorization tasks. The study found that "higher levels of fitness have

their greatest impact in the most challenging situations." In other words, the harder something is to learn, the greater role physical fitness appears to play.

This is backed up by a study of Nebraska students published in The Journal of Pediatrics in August. The Nebraska study found that "aerobic fitness was a significant predictor of academic performance" while, interestingly, weight status was not. Researchers looked at the aerobic fitness levels of nearly 12,000 public school students in conjunction with their performance on the state reading and math tests.

"Children who are physically fit do better than their peers at absorbing and retaining new information."

Parents and educators are bound to find these results compelling. What is even more striking is the timing of this information – just when the Philadelphia Public School District is struggling with severe budget cuts. These cuts have forced schools to eliminate the majority of after school sports and activities. Our students are getting less and less of the proven support they need to learn and thrive in school.

Starfinder has long been committed to getting kids active – especially those living in underserved communities. More importantly, we help kids understand the benefits of an active lifestyle. Participants in our programs demonstrate an increased commitment to participating in sports and staying active.

We know that young people who move are healthier in their bodies and minds. These two studies are just the latest proof.

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Program News

Heat Can't Stop Starfinder Kids



Our summer camp participants braved the heat and rain in June and July at sites across the city, using our programs as a reason to get outside and get active. Over 300 kids, ages 6-14, received personal attention and positive coaching they would not otherwise have been able to afford.

We partnered with Germantown Soccer Club, Helping Hand Rescue Mission, Kensington Soccer Club, and Multicultural Family Services Center to provide programs to kids in

neighborhoods throughout Philadelphia and nearby Lansdowne.

This year, we piloted a curriculum from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation called EmpowerME, designed to teach kids to make healthier life choices.

During the two-week camps, participants were coached by Starfinder's youth leaders. Serving as role models, our teen coaches taught participants the basics of soccer while promoting Starfinder's values of teamwork, commitment, and responsibility.

Dee Dee, one of the teen coaches, noticed that some kids came in with a tough attitude at first... "and then we saw that it was attention—they just needed attention. They needed to know that someone was willing to work with them and not against them. And once you gave them your attention and showed them 'I'm here for you,' then all they wanted to do was play and get attention and feel like the spotlight is on them."

"The best thing the kids got out of this was being coached by young people from their same backgrounds who are giving back to the community," said Jeannette Hibbs, Program Administration Director.

A big thanks to everyone who gave during our spring fundraiser- your support helped make our summer camps a resounding success!



Goodbye Summer, Hello Fall...

Register online for our fall programs! Future, Junior, and Soccer Girls Rule are going on now, and Senior Leaders starts November 5th.

For more information, contact Nick Chrisanthos: 215-435-1383 or nicholas@starfinderfoundation.org, or visit our website.

Program News

Who Wears the Stinky Pinnie?



When is “stinky” a compliment? When you get awarded with the Starfinder Stinky Pinnie! This coveted award went to the hardest working teen coach each day of our summer programs this summer. (The Stinky Pinnie recognized who got the sweatiest and thus the stinkiest!)

Thanks to our summer internship program, ten Starfinder teens got intensive professional development and work experience as paid coaches in our summer camps this year. They worked tirelessly to ensure a rewarding experience for our campers.

The process started back in the spring, when 18 candidates from Starfinder’s Senior Leaders program participated in professional

development workshops and an intensive application process. They learned what to expect in an interview—even how to shake hands—before interviewing with a selection committee.

“I had never done an interview before,” said Danny (age 18). “Now I know the process: how I should dress, formal language I should use, not to slouch. And that is going to help all of us, because we are all going to go into the workforce and we are all going to have to be in an interview.”

After the coaches were hired, they learned to meet job expectations, both from Starfinder and themselves.

“All through middle school and high school, I was always late,” said Jakeema (age 18). “But coming here showed me that I needed to be more responsible. I never took being on time that seriously until I did this program.”

Dee Dee (age 15) learned the benefits of planning ahead. “When I worked with my previous soccer coaching job, I didn’t ever plan. I would just do, and it didn’t always work out. So being prepared is something I [will] always take with me.”

The coaches agreed that they felt their summer internships gave them a sense of what working life would be like, and what it would mean for them.

“I actually felt good giving up my personal time,” said Dee Dee. “It felt good because I felt like a leader to somebody else.”

Though their future jobs may not include stinky pinnies, we are certain all of our teens will excel at whatever they tackle next!

Where Are They Now?: Starfinder Graduate Emmanuelle Kollie is playing soccer for Syracuse.

Known to his friends as “Gogo,” Emmanuelle Kollie moved to Philadelphia from Liberia at the age of 13, and started playing soccer at Starfinder soon after. He graduated from Father Judge High School in 2010, and recently transferred into Syracuse University. He’s majoring in Child and Family Studies and wants to be a coach.

What brought you in to Starfinder?

One of my teammates told Tony Williams [Starfinder’s founder] about me, so I went to meet him, and he told me I was welcome to come play. And then, it was like I was living there. I went there every day to play and do my schoolwork. It was a really big deal. I had a lot of opportunity to get stuff done, and when I started thinking about college, I applied using their facilities.

What’s one great memory of something that happened while you were at Starfinder?

One of the best experiences I had there was getting to work with the younger group. The kids who were out there really looked up to you, so you had to be on your best behavior and be a role model. I really had to part with every negative activity I was doing, and all the negative company I was keeping, because I knew these kids were holding me as an example.

What positive effects has Starfinder had on your life?

Most kids, when they hit 16 or 17, they face a lot of peer pressure. I wasn’t a bad kid, but I lived in a bad neighborhood. But Starfinder wasn’t in the neighborhood, so I couldn’t get into any of the stuff that was going on near my house. If it

wasn’t for Starfinder, I don’t know, something bad might have happened. But instead, I was playing every day after school and not getting back home until late.

Also, Tony Williams spoke to a guy at Father Judge about me, and I ended up getting in. He really opened the gateway for me there. Starfinder opened a lot of doors for me. And that’s what Starfinder is about—whatever help you need, in terms of soccer or education.

How is college different than high school?

It takes a lot of time management. It’s class, then homework, then meeting with a professor, then going to your activities, and finding time for all of it. I’ve had to work really hard to learn how to do this, and how not to procrastinate. But it’s a positive environment for me. I wanted to be here. I wanted to be able to focus on school and soccer.

Do you have any advice for kids currently at Starfinder?

A lot of kids go there mostly because they don’t want to be at home, but they really have a lot of opportunities at Starfinder, and they need to make the most of it. Every time I didn’t take advantage of an opportunity I had there, I regret.



Emmanuelle, (center) is surrounded by his teammates after scoring a goal for his Premier Development League soccer team, against the Philadelphia Union.

Program News

Beyond Sport Summit & Youth Ambassadors

Beyond Sport, an international organization that supports the use of sports to promote positive social change, recognized two Starfinder alumni as Young Ambassadors!

Mallory Fredericks, a Starfinder program coach, and Sallen Woewiyu, a program graduate and current Eastern University student, were selected after they both overcame difficult circumstances to achieve personal, academic, and athletic success.

The organization chose eight ambassadors as part of the Beyond Sport Summit held in Philadelphia, which we were proud to attend.

The summit is the largest gathering in the world of teams and leagues, nonprofit organizations, and businesses that use sports as a tool for change.

Attendees included representatives from local, national, and international businesses and nonprofits, such as ESPN, Coach Across America, and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation.

They came from all over the country and the world, from as close by as Washington, DC, to as far away as Afghanistan.

Speakers included former NBA legend Dikembe Mutombo, former Eagles safety Brian Dawkins, and Governor Ed Rendell.



Thank You, Funders!

We are deeply grateful for several recent grants. The **Horner Foundation** and **Football for Hope** (a collaboration of FIFA and streetfootballworld) recently made important contributions to our Senior Leaders Program for teens. The **Barra Foundation** made a generous gift in support of strategic planning this fall and winter, and the **Cozen O'Connor Foundation** renewed its annual support of our programs in general. Thank you to these and all our funders for making a difference in the lives of our youth!

FIFA TV Tells the Starfinder Story!



FIFA's charitable arm Football for Hope profiled Starfinder in a recent web video. Check out the "Featured Videos" section of our homepage at starfinderfoundation.org!

It's Back-to-School Season...

Do you have any unneeded academic supplies or soccer gear? Donate them to Starfinder and help us keep our programs well supplied! Check out our Wish List :

Academic Supplies

Binders
Spiral or composite notebooks
Computer & construction paper
Colored card stock
Dry erase markers
Pens & pencils
Colored pencils & markers
Electronic pencil sharpeners
Tape
Scissors
Staplers
Poster board or Post-It easel

Soccer equipment

Cleats (especially larger sizes: 5 and up)
Soccer socks & shinguards
Goal keeper gloves
Fitness Equipment (speed

ladders, bands, hurdles, ropes, etc.)
Small goals (portable)
Cones
Balls
Pinnies

A big shout out to all of the donors that have already given:

Clif Bar & Company
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Your support makes all the difference!



To donate supplies to Starfinder, contact Clare Shepherd at clare@starfinderfoundation.org or call 215-764-5410.

Thank You, Donors! (July 1, 2012- June 30, 2013)

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(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.



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