



## **Soccer for Social Change . . . Leadership Beyond the Game**

### **February 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.*

### **Lunch Time Soccer!**

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12- 1PM, Starfinder is open for adult pickup soccer games. Come chase away the winter blues!! \$5 per person.

For info and to sign up: contact Nick at 215-435-1383 or [nick@starfinderfoundation.org](mailto:nick@starfinderfoundation.org).

### **Sign up for the Starfinder newsletter online!!**

Go to our website: [www.starfinderfoundation.org](http://www.starfinderfoundation.org) and add your name to our email list.

Starfinder Foundation  
4015 Main Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19127  
215-764-5410  
[www.starfinderfoundation.org](http://www.starfinderfoundation.org)

### **First Shot by Steve Baumann, President**

UNICEF recently released a report entitled "The Children Left Behind" that examined inequality in well-being on a wide range of measures among children in 24 of the world's richest countries. Our rankings here in the United States were among the worst. For **material well-being we ranked 23rd**, 19th in educational resources and 22nd in living space. For **educational well-being we ranked 19th**, 13th in math literacy and 24th in science literacy. For **health well-being we ranked 22nd**, 24th in complaints of health problems, 20th in healthy eating, and 16th in vigorous physical activity.

Here at Starfinder we are focused on the physical, educational and personal development of young people from underserved communities, inspiring them to achieve success both on and off the field. We promote youth leadership, a love of learning, the benefits of teamwork and the rewards of commitment and responsibility. Our soccer activities promote physical, mental, and emotional development that nourishes the whole child. Through soccer we provide the opportunity for young people to enhance their personal fitness, perform to their athletic ability and learn skills that enhance their technical and tactical understanding of the game.



Senior Leaders with mentors from Penn State University

We also engage participants in a developmentally appropriate educational curriculum that promotes learning about diversity, tolerance, health, and decision-making. Through communication, teamwork, and perseverance with their mentors and peers, Starfinder youth find new reasons to be motivated about individual and school learning. Additionally, Starfinder supports the growth of individual character and leadership through the development of values and skills that: enhance physical, social, and academic competence; promote caring and respect for others; create connections to family, peers, neighborhood and school; and strengthen confidence, self worth, and aspiration.



Middle school girls in the Soccer Girls Rule program.

These rankings are intractable, but here at Starfinder we work daily to do our part to enhance the health, educational, and personal well-being of all of our participants. We strive to create pathways which once followed will move children ahead, not leave them behind. I am hopeful that articles in this month's newsletter will provide you with some concrete examples of the good work we are doing.

### **Also in this issue:**

#### Winter Programs

- Senior Leaders (Grades 9-12): College News & Messages in Motion
- Future and Junior Leaders (Grades 1-8)
- SGR at the Walnut Street Theatre
- Soccer and Art!!

#### Thank You for Your Help

- Starfinder Obliterated its Annual Appeal Goal!
- MLK Day of Service
- Two Exciting Grants

# Winter Programs

## Senior Leaders (Grades 9-12)

**College News** - Starfinder is committed to providing a support system for each Senior Leader that will enhance the probability of that individual not only graduating, but achieving post secondary education after high school. During the 2009-2010 school year, 15 juniors participated in JEVS Human Services' *Score for Success* college preparation program. This program provides high school juniors and seniors with an S.A.T. preparations course, visits to colleges in the Pennsylvania area, and assistance in completing admission and financial aid applications. Participants also receive individual counseling sessions to better match their interests and abilities with suitable post secondary institutions.

Of those individuals who participated, 11 have already been accepted to universities and colleges in Pennsylvania. As of this newsletter, all of our high school senior participants are on track to graduate, and we continue to support them as they complete the college application process.

**Mamie Dukuray** and **Ibrahim Kamara** are both accepted at Penn State University. Mamie will be attending at the Brandywine campus and Ibrahim will attend at the State College campus. **Luc Toussaint** has been accepted to Neumann University and has been awarded a Presidential Scholarship. **Mohamed Bah, Mustapha Alpha and Hamed Badini** have all decided to attend community college for the first two years in order to solidify their areas of interest. They plan to transfer into a 4-year university after earning Associate Degrees. **Sekou Konneh** has been accepted at Widener University. **Sumo Yarkpawolo** will attend Cabrini College, and **Nasser Ibrahim** has been accepted at Temple University. **Yohanna Ghede** has to make a decision between Rosemont College, where he could play varsity soccer, and La Salle University, a top choice school that he wants to attend. **Melanie Sachs** has been accepted at Drexel University where she will take up psychology.

Starfinder congratulates all our seniors on their achievements and thanks the following programs: Penn State University's Schreyer Honors College, JEVS Career Strategies, and SPELLS Writing Lab.

**Messages in Motion** - Congratulations to all of the Senior Leaders who participated in this fall's Media and Technology class. This class asked each participant to share a bit of their personal story with the world, and, with their permission, we now share their stories with you. The fall program challenged participants to use video clips, still photos, and audio narration to capture images and sounds that supported their personal stories. Each individual wrote a script, created a storyboard, and produced a short one-minute video about their home, their family, their neighborhood or their life aspirations.

The project took place over seven weeks and required production time both here at Starfinder and at home. The final products are all unique and provide more insight about the participants in the Senior Leaders Program. Each student that completed the



assignment was awarded a Starfinder scarf and had the privilege of screening their video in front of their peers.

To view the edited compilation of their work, *Many Stories, One Place*, visit our website ([www.starfinderfoundation.org](http://www.starfinderfoundation.org)) and click the link on the right side of the home page.

The participants will get the opportunity to enhance their video documentary skills during the winter session when they will be tasked with documenting the process of creating public service announcements about a social issue. The project will be facilitated by the University Community Collaborative of Philadelphia (UCCP) and AR Creative. The UCCP's programming is designed to develop critical thinking and leadership skills in youth so that they can become agents of social change in their communities and beyond. AR Creative facilitates the Media and Technology component in the Senior Leaders program. Starfinder looks forward to what will be another fantastic program session.

## Soccer and Art!!

This winter, at Starfinder, SOCCER and ART go together like spaghetti and meatballs, peanut butter and jelly, and bacon and eggs. Yes, soccer and art -- a perfect combination. Last summer Baily Cypress, an accomplished mosaic artist, approached Starfinder about a doing a mural project with our youth. Once completed the tile and glass mural will be 2 ½ feet high by 230 feet long and bring energy, color and bit of flair to the outside of Starfinder's Manayunk facility.

During the summer Baily conducted five preliminary design sessions with twenty of our Senior Leaders. They chose a theme for the mural and began to develop a visual vocabulary. Since 2010

was a World Cup year, and because many of our students are immigrants, they decided to explore the international aspect of the game of soccer, organized along a timeline. This format works especially well, given the long, narrow shape of the wall surface. The teens began researching online, drawing elements for the mural, cutting out some initial pieces and learning basic glass cutting and mosaic techniques.

The project is now fully underway and has expanded to include all of Starfinder's winter participants. Every child will learn how to cut and break the porcelain tiles, mirrors, and colored glass. They will then affix the pieces to a series of panels that will be installed during the spring. Once the mural is completed, Starfinder will host a celebration of its new look and all the hard work that went into creating it. SOCCER and ART... a match that works this winter at Starfinder!





## Future and Junior Leaders (Grades 1-8)

As winter is busy causing havoc to outdoor landscapes, there is one pitch kept warm with smiles of excitement. Starfinder's Manayunk facility is a place where a young person's passion for soccer and learning provides fuel for the body and the imagination. Whether kids are pretending to be sharks feeding on dribbling minnows or phantoms avoiding slime-wielding ghostbusters, these games are still about the great sport that they love to play. Our elementary age Future Leaders have spent much of their on-field time since December honing their footwork through exercises that improve dribbling, passing, and receiving the ball. Hosts of fun games provide opportunities to emphasize the use of both feet, body posture, use of the inside and outside of the foot, and juggling to develop overall ball touch. Every session culminates with small-sided games where each child gets to put in play the new insights gained from the technical training.



Off the field, the Future Leaders are learning about the core values that are cherished at Starfinder. They created colorful collages to demonstrate their understanding of respect, integrity, persistence, teamwork, and caring. They also learned about the Food Pyramid and how to read a food label to better understand the nutritional value in common food stuffs. A mid-January highlight involved making and eating Sunshine Rollups, a healthy snack made of cucumbers and other fruits and vegetables. According to the kids, they were "very yummy!". Interesting discussions also took place as Future Leaders learned about the countries of Ivory Coast and Paraguay and shared their thoughts about what might be similar and different between these far off places and our home here in Philadelphia.

Our middle school age Junior Leaders have also focused on the field on their technical improvement with an emphasis on how to attack and defend in one-on-one situations. We put all of the Junior Leaders through a series of skills testing and recorded their performance. We are eager to see how they improve when we get to the end of the winter session. Our small-sided games are a highlight of each evening and the contests have been very spirited.

In the classroom, various team building games and activities have helped to develop cohesion among our diverse group of participants. Lessons that strengthen confidence and decision-making are a key element of the Junior Leaders program and so far discussions during these activities have been very robust. Junior Leaders girls are engaged this year in activities presented as part of the Women's Sports Foundation's *GoGirlGo!* program, and these new lessons are very pertinent to the challenges girls face as they enter adolescence. The boys are equally busy learning about the strategies they can use to withstand peer pressure and communicate effectively with peers and adults.



The winter is off to a great start, and we feel privileged to have such a wonderful, enthusiastic, and energetic group of young people spending their weekday evenings here at Starfinder.

## Soccer Girls Rule at the Walnut Street Theatre

### "Break a Leg!"

In the world of soccer a player can be thrown out of the game for those harsh words. After spending Saturday, January 22nd at the Walnut Street Theatre, adolescent girls in the Soccer Girls Rule (SGR) program now understand the phrase to have multiple meanings.

Soccer Girls Rule is Starfinder's new two-year program that combines soccer and athletic training with a variety of structured experiences that help middle school girls from under-resourced communities enhance their self-esteem, resilience, and self-efficacy on the field, in the classroom, in their communities, and in life. Soccer Girls Rule is funded by The Barra Foundation.

Working with talented young actors from The Walnut Street Theatre's Residency and Outreach Program, SGR participants from Philadelphia's Jay Cooke and Hostos Middle Schools spent the morning dancing, acting, and most definitely emoting as they learned to express their inner emotions and creativity through purposeful movement. As the young divas sketched portraits across the hardwood floor and focused intently on their reflections in the wall-to-wall full length mirrors, the only sound one could hear was the shuffle and patter of eager feet.



"Wow! You girls can really dance for being soccer players," remarked one of the session leaders.

In these expressive moments, the girls freed all their inhibitions as they presented a collection of poses

and animation that represented their individual interpretation of words such as fierce, bully, energy and power.

After a break for refreshments and lunch the girls attended a performance of *Mean Girlz R Bullies 2*. This performance explored how it is not easy being the new kid in school, navigating everything from the social cliques to the lunchroom line. Sometimes, middle school is just hard. And sometimes, teenagers are just mean. This musical about jocks, brains, queen bees and wannabes focused on the realities of adolescence—gossip, body image, the nature of popularity and the challenges of being different. It was a powerful show that explored the secret culture of teenage aggression and asked: why are teenagers mean to each other and what can we do about it?

It was a great day for our girls. Stay tuned for SGR encores and curtain calls!



# Thank You for Your Help!!

## Starfinder Obliterated its Annual Appeal Goal!

...And it's all thanks to you!

This year we set ourselves the challenge of raising \$25,000 during our 2010 annual appeal campaign. This was an ambitious goal, considering that we had barely broken \$10,000 in the past. But this year we had a secret weapon: you! In fact, we blasted right past our goal, thanks to the hard work of a group of our most dedicated friends (dubbed "Team Captains" for the campaign) who made personal appeals to their communities on Starfinder's behalf.

**As of February 1st we have raised \$41,991 from 211 gifts!!!**

Wow.

We are humbled and deeply grateful for this outpouring of support!

For a list of 2010 annual appeal donors, go online to:  
<http://starfinderfoundation.org/support-sf/2010-annual-appeal-donors.html>

## Two Exciting Grants!

We are thrilled to announce the receipt of two important new grants:

- The Fund for Children of the Philadelphia Foundation recently awarded Starfinder \$50,000 to support the Senior Leaders Program. Starfinder's athletic, educational and personal development programs help young people from underserved communities achieve success both on and off the soccer field. The Senior Leaders Program, in particular, encourages participants to graduate from high school and pursue college and career opportunities.

- Starfinder also received \$10,400 from Olympique Lyonnais, the premier French soccer team, to support our Junior Leaders and Soccer Girls Rule programs for middle school age girls. Starfinder's programs for girls are specifically designed to address and overcome the barriers that frequently prevent urban girls from participating in sports and cultivating lifelong habits of exercise and athleticism.

We are grateful for these and all the grants we receive to sustain our programs for underserved urban youth.

## MLK Day of Service

On January 17th we were proud to be a part of the largest Martin Luther King Day of Service in Philadelphia's history. For the second year in a row we benefitted from the support of a group of volunteers from Vanguard. Mixed in with the painting and repairs was an opportunity for some of our Senior Leaders to connect with the volunteers. Thank you Vanguard volunteers for helping us continue to spruce up our facility and for spending your Martin Luther King Day of Service with Starfinder!!



## Please Support Starfinder!

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

**Make a secure donation online at:**

[www.starfinderfoundation.org](http://www.starfinderfoundation.org)

(click the Donate button)

OR

**Mail your gift to:**

Starfinder Foundation  
4015 Main Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19127

All donations are tax-deductable.

**Thank you!!**