



**HEART OF
THE CITY**



2020
Impact Report

To Our Community of Supporters:



When Heart of the City entered 2020, our program was moving full-speed ahead, thanks to the momentum all of you helped us gain over the past two years. And when the pandemic hit in March, like many nonprofit organizations across the country, we experienced much of that momentum coming to a halt.

Despite the challenges of this year, we are grateful for the unexpected positives that 2020 brought. This time allowed us to deepen relationships with our student-athletes and families in new ways. It allowed us to strengthen our bonds with our community partners, as well as form new partnerships, in order to serve our families and our community in a different capacity.

Through rolling out virtual programming, to ramping up our college recruitment efforts, to distributing hot meals, care packages and grocery boxes – our team has kept a pulse on how we can best serve our student-athletes in this time of crisis. And, we are proud of the many ways Heart of the City has adjusted and responded.

Despite the challenges, 100% of our graduating high school seniors were accepted into a post-secondary program. However, not all of them were able to attend school in the fall due to COVID-19. For the graduating class of 2021, we recognize the pathway to post-secondary success looks much different than it did this time last year. On a national scale, college enrollment declined 2.5%* in 2020. And, more alarmingly, 1 in 3 students from low-income schools should have enrolled in college in the fall, but did not due to hardships created by the COVID-19 pandemic.**



These challenges are compounded daily as we continue to navigate this pandemic. As we enter 2021, our team has a focused strategy to ensure we can continue to do the work that is necessary to keep youth active, connected to their coach-mentors, and on-track to achieving their post-secondary goals.

To every one of our supporters who contribute to our program, especially in this time of crisis, we extend our heartfelt thanks. We simply could not do this work without you.

Lori Kleiman
President, Board of Directors

Scott McLellan
Executive Director

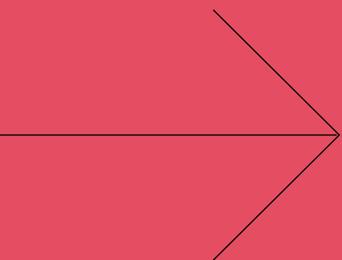
***National Student Clearing House Research Center, 2021**

****National College Attainment Network, 2020**



Mission

Heart of the City empowers youth in underserved communities in Lake County through soccer, with the goal of achieving post-secondary success.



heartofthecitysports.org/aboutus/



A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Heart of the City empowers its players, coaches, and their families through the sport of soccer, promoting opportunities for personal development, academic achievement, and college success.

Heart of the City provides an opportunity for youth in the Lake County area to participate in recreational and competitive soccer activities.

We believe that all youth should have access to high-quality sports programs and to academic learning opportunities, and as a result, we endeavor to teach our players to be competitive on the field, successful in their school, and productive in their community.

Our Community

COMMUNITY NEED

37.2%

of youth ages 18-24 in Lake County, IL are first-generation college bound.

52.5%

of Latinx youth ages 18-24 in Lake County, IL are first-generation college bound.

Percentage of youth qualifying for free and reduced lunch in Heart of the City's primary service areas:

59%

Waukegan

57%

Zion/Benton

49%

Warren Township

95%

North Chicago

71%

Round Lake

WHO WE SERVE

38% girls

62% boys

81% Hispanic / Latinx

7% White / Caucasian

6% Black / African American

4% Other / Multi-racial

2% Asian

LAKE COUNTY RESIDENTS

50% Waukegan

9% Beach Park

9% Zion

8% North Chicago

6% Round Lake

5% Gurnee

4% Park City

9% Other
(elsewhere in Lake County)



“Heart of the City is a great club for young adults to be involved with. The trust that the club gives the girls makes the girls be more confident in themselves. The club has been a reason for my daughter to be more motivated in playing soccer and be more accountable with school. Thanks to the club we are having a better idea of what university we need to search for and consider.”

- Aleida & Martin Zarinana, parents



Program Continuum

Using soccer as the vehicle, our programs are designed to provide a developmental pathway for youth to build social-emotional and leadership skills, access academic support, and earn stackable credentials for postsecondary education and employment success. Heart of the City has many connections throughout the community. We offer referrals for physical & mental health, family, legal, immigration, housing and other services. Please refer to our website partner page for a complete list.

Community Clinics

Free, introductory soccer experiences for the community. Access to a safe and fun environment that promotes physical health and improves social skills, coordination, gross motor skills, communication and teamwork. Heart of the City partners with several community organizations and non-profit organizations to host community clinics.

ELEMENTARY

5-11 years • Introduction/Learning





Soccer Academy

A developmental in-house recreational soccer program. Access to a safe and fun environment that improves soccer skill development, fosters social-emotional learning such as decision-making, problem-solving skills, self-awareness, and conflict-resolution. Access to coach-mentors and positive adult role models who infuse youth development experiences within the training curriculum.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

11-14 years • Instilling the Big Picture

HOTC Elite

A competitive soccer and postsecondary-readiness program. Access to a competitive club soccer program that combines highly-skilled coaching and training with college and postsecondary-readiness support. The Elite program provides support in planning post-secondary pathways, offers college visits and career-readiness opportunities, guidance with the college recruitment process, access to positive coach mentors, leadership and mentorship opportunities

HIGH SCHOOL

14-19 years • Preparing for Life after High School



Our Covid-19 Response

The COVID-19 pandemic hit our community quickly and unexpectedly. Heart of the City responded to this community crisis by surveying our student-athletes and families to see how we could help in this time of need. Our staff quickly adjusted our programs to devlier content virtually, and rolled out several initiatives to meet the community's most critical needs.



118

served in our modified soccer program



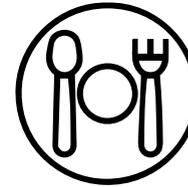
550

essential PPE and care package items distributed



100

nonperishable grocery boxes distributed



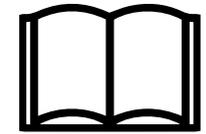
500

hot meals distributed



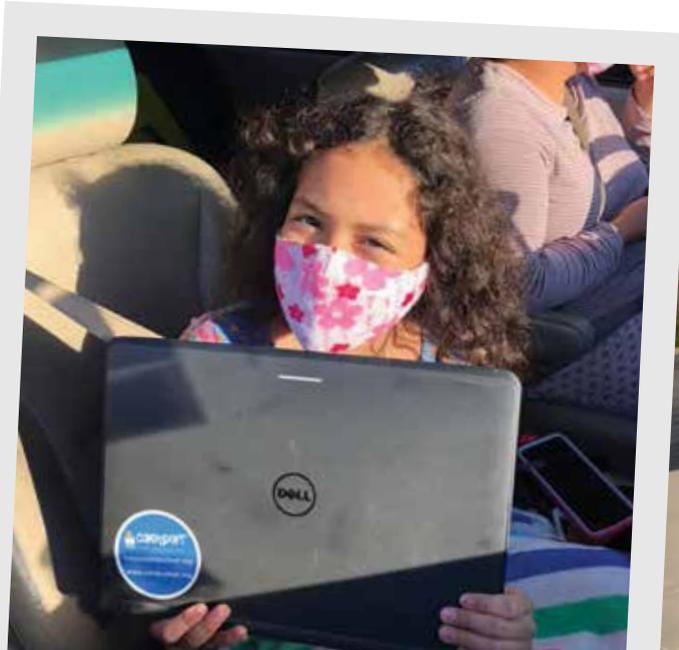
60

backpacks filled with school supplies distributed



224 Hours

learning lab in-person support for e-learning





“Heart of the City has helped my kids in so many ways, like keeping them and myself informed with future college planning. They and I enjoy all that HOTC has to offer, like the Learning Lab, which helped my kids to get back on track with school grades and homework this year. HOTC has also kept my kids physically and mentally busy with practice and games, along with meeting new people and making lifetime memories.”

—Veronica Lopez, Parent

January

- College visits to Eureka College, Lincoln College and Lincoln Christian University
- HOTC Elite indoor winter soccer season
- Winter Recreational Soccer Academy
- Grassroots community clinics with LEARN 9 Charter School
- Ongoing post-secondary readiness support



July

- Conducted on-field soccer tryouts and training at the Waukegan SportsPark in accordance with new health and safety guidelines
- Continued offering opportunities for cooking classes through partnership with Beacon Place
- Continued with virtual education support and weekly program newsletter updates with crisis resources



February

- College visits to Calumet College of St. Joseph and Marian University
- 20 student-athletes completed the US Soccer Referee certification clinic
- College Showcase Tournament: U19 girls team takes 2nd place in the Dimitri Cup in Naples, FL
- HOTC Elite indoor winter soccer season
- Winter Recreational Soccer Academy
- Grassroots community clinics with Boys & Girls Club of Lake County and Learn 9 Charter School
- Ongoing post-secondary readiness support

August

- With the help of donors and our sponsors - The Xcel Group and Power Waukegan- we provided our student-athletes with 60 backpacks full of school supplies for e-learning
- Held a Fall Academy soccer program at the Waukegan SportsPark where over 90 youth were able to participate despite new COVID-19 restrictions
- Continued with virtual education support and weekly program newsletter updates with crisis resources



March

- HOTC Elite indoor winter soccer season
- COVID-19 pandemic hits. Heart of the City offices close and in-person programming is suspended.

Heart of the City quickly implemented:

- Virtual educational support, including virtual check-ins, post-secondary action plans, career assessment tests, college soccer recruitment, college application support, virtual ACT prep
- Techne App to provide virtual soccer training student-athletes could complete at home
- Weekly program newsletter sent to families with crisis response resources and other COVID-19 updates and information



September

- Opened our Fall Learning Lab, offering in-person support for students' e-learning in our program center, and served 15 student-athletes per week
- Hosted a College Soccer Recruitment Seminar for high school girls & boys with College of Lake County and Calumet College of St. Joseph coaches in attendance
- Hosted community clinic soccer sessions at Waukegan SportsPark in partnership with the Waukegan Park District
- Continued our Fall Academy soccer program at the Waukegan SportsPark
- Continued with virtual education support and weekly program newsletters updates with crisis resources

April

- Partnership with The Sports Shed to give soccer balls to youth in need in our programs so they can continue to get exercise at home
- Introduced weekly educational quizzes conducted with Kahoot to keep student-athletes engaged and entertained during the stay-at-home order
- Continued with virtual education support, Techne App virtual soccer training and weekly program newsletter updates with crisis resources

October

- Hosted a College Soccer ID event with over 60 high school-aged youth in attendance and 12 college coaches in attendance
- Collaborated with Art Impact Project to bring therapeutic art-making activities to our student-athletes
- Continued supporting e-learning needs through our Fall Learning Lab
- Continued our Fall Academy soccer program at the Waukegan SportsPark
- Continued community clinics in partnership with the Waukegan Park District
- Continued with virtual education support and weekly program newsletters updates with crisis resources



May

- Rolled out crisis response initiatives. With the help of donors and community partners, we distributed:
 - 550 essential PPE and care package items to families
 - 500 hot meals distributed to families through partnership with Green Town Tavern
 - 50 boxes of nonperishable groceries distributed through partnership with Curt's Cafe
- Heart of the City staff arranged a graduating Senior drive-by parade. Staff members drove by our graduating Seniors houses and dropped off goodies to recognize the accomplishments of our senior class
- Graduating Seniors: Despite the challenges posed by the shutdown, all 18 of our seniors graduated high school and pursued postsecondary plans.
- Continued with virtual education support, Techne App virtual soccer training, Kahoot quizzes, and weekly program newsletter updates with crisis resources

November

- Fall Learning Lab ends and logs a total of 224 hours total in-person support for e-learning
- Partnered with Computot to distribute 200 laptops to families in need in the Lake County community
- Continued our Fall Academy soccer program at the Waukegan SportsPark.
- Continued partnering with Art Impact Project to bring therapeutic art-making activities to our student-athletes
- Continued with virtual education support and weekly program newsletters updates with crisis resources



June

- Continued crisis response initiative due to increased need. With the help of donors and community partners, we distributed:
 - An additional 50 boxes of nonperishable groceries distributed through partnership with Curt's Cafe
 - 300 cooked chickens distributed to the Lake County community through partnership with La Canoa
- Provided an opportunity for virtual cooking classes for families through partnership with Beacon Place
- Participated in the 2020 LGBTQ+ Pride Drive as a partner organization
- Continued with virtual education support, Techne App virtual soccer training, Kahoot quizzes, and weekly program newsletter updates with crisis resources
- The Illinois Governor announced on June 29th that all youth soccer leagues and tournaments in Illinois will be suspended until further notice. Upon this announcement, Heart of the City staff had to quickly shift plans for fall programming to prepare to host an internal, socially-distanced Fall Soccer Academy and make plans to create a Fall Learning Lab to support e-learning needs.

December

- Due to COVID-19 restrictions set by the Illinois Department of Health on November 20th, all indoor sports were suspended. The Winter Academy, scheduled to start on December 7th, was postponed.
- Heart of the City staff rolled out more virtual activities:
- Family fun nights, such as make-your-own tie dye t-shirts and hot cocoa bombs
- Virtual soccer training from home
- Due to increased need and concern around college recruiting given the pandemic, Heart of the City increases support for current high school seniors looking to get recruited in college.
- Continued with virtual education support and weekly program newsletters updates with crisis resources

“Heart of the City has really pushed me to do more with my college. They helped me fill out my applications, made sure I went on college visits, and helped me get in contact with coaches. I honestly don’t know if I would be playing soccer in college right now if it wasn’t for Heart of the City.”

- Sofia, Heart of the City graduate

Name of Student-Athlete Sofia Melesio

Year Graduated 2020

Attending Marian University





Michael - Graduate

Name of Student-Athlete Michael Abarca

Year Graduated 2020

Attending Deciding between Lincoln Christian University, Garthage College or Marian University



“I think the thing I’ll remember most (about Heart of the City) is just the help that they give and the support. Because students like me and players like me -- I didn’t know where to go and what path to go...I was kind of lost in the flow. They give us a push and a good path to take, and just help us see the options of what we want to do with our lives.”

- Michael, Heart of the City graduate



Andrea - Graduate

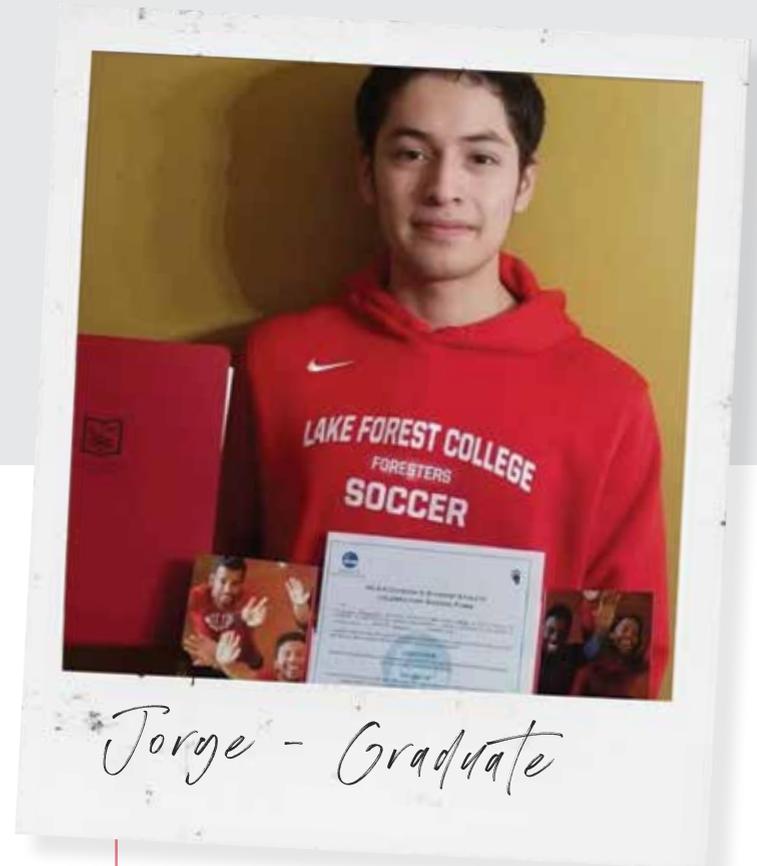
Name of Student-Athlete Andrea Guzman

Year Graduated 2020

Attending Illinois State University

“Heart of the City has truly challenged my son to be a better player on the field and a better person off the field. He has learned graceful losing, humble winning, and to be constantly challenging himself to be better for himself and his team.”

- Dana Hendren, parent



Jorge - Graduate

Name of Student-Athlete Jorge Alvarez

Year Graduated 2020

Attending Lake Forest College

2020 Graduating Class

Heart of the City is proud to announce all student-athletes who were high school seniors in 2020 graduated from their respective high schools and 100% were accepted into a post-secondary pathway. Congratulations to these incredible young men and women! Their results upon completion of our program are as follows:

Michael Abarca *Accepted to Carthage College, Marian University & Lincoln Christian University*

Jorge Alvarez *Committed to Lake Forest College playing collegiate soccer*

Pedro Arcos *Accepted to College of Lake County*

Jonathan Castro *Accepted to College of Lake County*

Christopher Corona *Accepted to College of Lake County*

Anthony Crespo *Accepted to Lincoln Christian University*

& College of Lake County

Rodrigo de la Torre *Accepted to College of Lake County*

Andrea Guzman *Committed to Illinois State University*

Jorge Lozano *Accepted to Roosevelt University, Rockford University*

& College of Lake County

Sofia Melesio *Committed to Marian University playing collegiate soccer*

Keona Moore *Committed to Marquette University*

Leilani Morales *Enlisted in the United States Armed Forces*

David Rivera *Accepted to College of Lake County*

Jasmine Perez *Accepted to Dominican University, Marquette University*

and Marian University

Hector Picaso *Accepted to College of Lake County*

José Reyes *Accepted to College of Lake County*

Emily Salgado *Enlisted in the United States Marine Corps*

Jeremy Vargas *Accepted to College of Lake County*

Carlos Vasquez *Accepted to College of Lake County*



2020 FINANCIALS

Funding Sources

Individuals & Small Businesses	\$1,214,908.00
Grants	\$166,696.00
Program Registration Fees	\$43,808.00
Sponsorship	\$5,776.00
Special Events	\$2,820.00
Total	\$1,434,008 .00

* These numbers were not audited at the time of printing.
For a copy of our audited financial statements, please
contact our Director of Finance.

OUR 2020 DONORS

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Walmart Foundation - Lake Zurich Store
Walmart Foundation - Waukegan Store

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\$5,000-\$9,999

Andrew and Alice Fischer Charitable Trust
Anonymous
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Anonymous
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First Midwest Bank
Maggie and Jaime Morales, Jr.

\$100-\$249

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