



**HEART OF
THE CITY**

2021 **IMPACT REPORT**

heartofthecitysports.org

From The Director

One thing we know for sure: the pandemic amplified the hardships we all face on a daily basis. Which is why, as we saw life start to return to normal last year, or at least be more comfortable, families were eager to return to the soccer field. And we were eager to see them.

By last fall, we were back to full capacity as if Covid had never happened. But the hardships families experienced during the height of the pandemic had not disappeared. We just had to find new ways to overcome them.

Since college showcases had stopped and travel became near impossible, we brought the college coaches to us. These College ID events gave our student athletes the opportunity to play for, speak with, and be scouted by regional college coaches.

Health and wellness services became essential for our families, so we continued working with community partners to provide the tools and information our families needed, such as food resources, immigration information, technology, and healthcare. Putting our student athletes at the center, we began to implement wrap-around comprehensive care services.

As a staff and board, we refined our mission and vision and created a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) plan to eliminate discriminatory practices and ensure a more inclusive organization that fosters respect and embraces multicultural voices.

We are still learning to live with a pandemic that might never go away, but I want to thank you for your support of our programs as we continue to teach soccer and leadership skills on the field, narrow the academic achievement gap off the field, and provide the health and wellness support that is so needed in our communities.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott McLellan', written over a thin horizontal line.

Scott McLellan
Executive Director

From The Board President

Heart of the City has undergone a remarkable evolution in the past two years as we continued to provide our soccer programs through the Covid-19 pandemic. It is with no doubt that during this time we all faced significant challenges in keeping up our momentum and progress that we had made on and off the soccer field. There were many long months where our best assets were an optimistic point of view and positive attitude. It is with this hope that we reemerged as an organization with a better understanding of our role in the community as a safe place for our student athletes and families.

This time also helped refine our views and create a richer understanding of our responsibility as coaches and mentors. We have witnessed the power that soccer has in helping to alleviate the daily anxieties our players face by providing them with a common purpose and supportive social structure through professional-level training. To that end, we have seen great growth from many players in their comprehension of the game as well as in their view of what it means to be a leader. I would like to recognize the talented coaches and support staff who worked

tirelessly to assist our student athletes and their families in pursuit of our individual definitions of "success" while, at the same time, focusing on our common goals.

I am proud to say Heart of the City is also greatly enriched by our players and families. We are proud to bring soccer programs that provide fundamental knowledge of the game, fair play, good sportsmanship and a renewed commitment to making sure that having FUN and enjoying our time together is a top priority.

Finally, if you have any spare time, I encourage you to get involved in the organization by volunteering during training sessions as an assistant coach or team manager for your child's team. I trust that this experience will provide you with another level of enjoyment for you and your family.

Thank you for the opportunity to be part of such an amazing organization in a community I love that celebrates the game I cherish.



David Motely

David Motely

President, Board of Directors



BOARD MEMBERS

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Attuned Care

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Scott McLellan

Heart of the City Executive Director





Heart of the City is committed to providing an accessible youth soccer program and access to high quality programs and experiences for our athletes.

OUR VISION

Recreational and competitive soccer is the pathway to personal success.

JOIN US AS A VOLUNTEER

We believe in creating opportunities for our communities to come together. Through our programs, you can volunteer at events, assist our coaches, create parent/student workshops, and much more.

Soccer Opportunities

Volunteer Coach • Become a certified soccer coach help coach our Grassroots and Academy teams.

Volunteer Referee • Become a certified soccer referee and work as a referee in our program.

Contact Dean Smith, Sporting Director dean@heartofthecitysports.org

College and Career Readiness Opportunities

Pre-practice programs • Speak to our students before practices to inspire and empower them or distribute material at a resource table during practices.

Reciprocal volunteer programs • Help identify volunteer and job shadowing opportunities for student athletes.

Contact Yanelly Villegas, Director of College and Career Readiness yanelly@heartofthecitysports.org

Event Opportunities

Gala committee • Help make our annual Gala a success by fundraising, planning, and implementing the event.

Contact Rene Lee, Director of Development & Marketing rena@heartofthecitysports.org



We all deserve a brighter future.



Sports can overcome the socioeconomic challenges families face, breaking generations of cycles of poverty and opening dreams. Our programs use the passion and energy kids feel towards the sport of soccer to help them reach their full potential. As student athletes join our soccer programs and build their skills on the field, our coaches and mentors help give them the resources, the knowledge, and the confidence to dream big off the field.

In communities where 1/3 of the students do not graduate high school, Heart of the City wants every child to play, be a part of a team, and succeed. We are committed to walking our student athletes down the pathway to success that culminates with high school graduation: empowering youth, helping families, strengthening communities.

GRADUATING SENIORS

Heart of the City is proud of our 2021 high school graduates. Eight of our nine graduates were accepted into post-secondary pathways at the following colleges: College of Lake County, Southeastern Community College, and Southern Illinois University.

Congratulations to these incredible young men and women!

Alicia Bahena

Itzel Hernandez

Marleth Lujano

Berenice Martinez

Julissa Perez

Mackenzie Ramsey

Rocio Salas

Miguel Vieyra

Jessie Zarinana



GRASSROOTS

Grassroots Soccer Clinics

Introducing Soccer

85 youth • Ages 5-14

In partnership with local schools, park districts, and non-profit organizations, our free, after-school and summer soccer clinics offer an introduction to soccer for families. Access to a safe, fun, positive outlet improves physical health, social skills, coordination, gross motor skills, communication, and teamwork.

Grassroots clinics

LEARN 9 Charter School, Waukegan

Prairie Trial School, Wadsworth

River Trail School, Gurnee

Waukegan Park District, Waukegan



heartofthecitysports.org/grassroots





The Grassroots program gives our youth an opportunity to expand their knowledge of soccer in a structured environment. They have fun while not realizing they are learning important 21st Century skills along the way. Heart of the City gives them the opportunity to gain skills that help them plan for the future and a chance to have fun in a sport they love.”

Amy • Boys and Girls Club of Lake County



ACADEMY

Soccer Academy

Instilling the Big Picture

256 youth • Ages 5-14

As kids progress to our developmental in-house recreation soccer program, they gain more opportunities to develop and improve their soccer abilities. Through the program, they also gain important life skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, teamwork, conflict-resolution, and self-awareness. Access to coaches and mentors and community resources keep students on track in school and physically and emotionally healthy.



heartofthecitysports.org/recreation



“

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 Parent



ELITE TRAVEL



Elite Preparing for Life After High School

172 youth • Ages 12-19

Our Elite student athletes participate in a competitive travel soccer program with top class coaching combined with college and career readiness resources. As students are starting to prepare for graduation and life after high school, our coaches and mentors blend highly skilled soccer training at quality facilities with academic support, college visits, financial aid workshops, and test prep courses. Our dynamic player development curriculum teaches valuable life skills to build self-esteem and help students see the potential for a brighter future.

This elite skill building program is accessible for all, regardless of income, thanks to subsidized costs, flexible payment plans, and scholarships with the help of our supporters and funders.





Through Heart of the City, my daughter has definitely gotten more confident in her leadership abilities. She is able to talk to others with tact and respect, she is able to speak in front of a team that might have had a terrible loss or a great win, and she has been able to know when to take a back seat and let others lead. She is also not afraid to speak up when necessary and tries to be mindful of when she should not say something. This year it has been so great to see her come out of her shell more and really try to lead and let her voice be heard. It's encouraging as she hopes to enter a field that is still underrepresented by women and minorities."

Esmeralda Parent



COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

As students enter our program at the Elite level and continue to increase their skills on the field, they begin to receive individualized development plans that include their academic and athletic goals, and college and career aspirations. Together with a coach or mentor, they create an actionable plan to help them perform well in school, focus on learning life skills, and take an active role in planning their future.

One third of the students in our largest surrounding community do not graduate high school, so we place prime emphasis on academic achievement and exposing youth to viable future pathways, including college, trade schools, the workforce, and the military.

For those athletes who would like to play soccer in college, we guide them through the process, provide opportunities to meet college coaches, and travel to college showcase tournaments and ID events. To build their resumes and give them stackable credentials, we set up volunteer and job shadowing opportunities, and offer referee and coach certification courses.

The crucial educational experiences we provide help youth become more aware of what a brighter future could mean for them. In a community where there are many first-generation college-bound youth, the ability to access experiences is so important for both students and parents, helping them navigate community resources and lead a life as an engaged citizen.





I think being a part of Heart of the City has fueled the fire in my daughter that she wants to do something amazing after high school. She has been able to take advantage of college visits to UIC, University of Wisconsin-Parkside, DePaul, and others that she really enjoyed. She liked hearing about how others are experiencing college and continues to be curious about it as she plans to attend one in the future.”

Esmeralda Parent



882

hours of post-
secondary education

167

hours of volunteer service

48

students attended our
college soccer ID event

9

students completed the United States
Soccer Federation (USSF) coaching
and referee certification course

OUR STUDENTS

32% girls

68% boys

45%

Make less than
\$40,000/year

13%

Kindergarten and
Pre-K

58%

Elementary

14%

Middle School

15%

High School

73%

Hispanic / Latinx

11%

Black / African American

7%

White / Caucasian

6%

Other / Multi-racial

1%

Arab American /
Middle Eastern

1%

Asian / Pacific Islander

1%

Native American

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS

56% Waukegan

11% North Chicago

8% Zion

8% Gurnee

5% Beach Park

4% Wadsworth

3% Great Lakes

3% Park City

1% Grayslake

1% Round Lake



OUR COMMUNITY

96%

of the students in our area high school identify as a minority

65%

of the seniors at Waukegan High School are on track to graduate

67%

of families qualify for free or reduced lunch based on income

55%

of the total population is Latinx, many of which do not speak English

37%

of all youth ages 18-24 in Lake County are first-generation college bound

53%

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



FINANCIALS

SOURCES OF INCOME

Grants

\$86,958

6%

86%

Program Fees

\$103,320

8%

Contributions

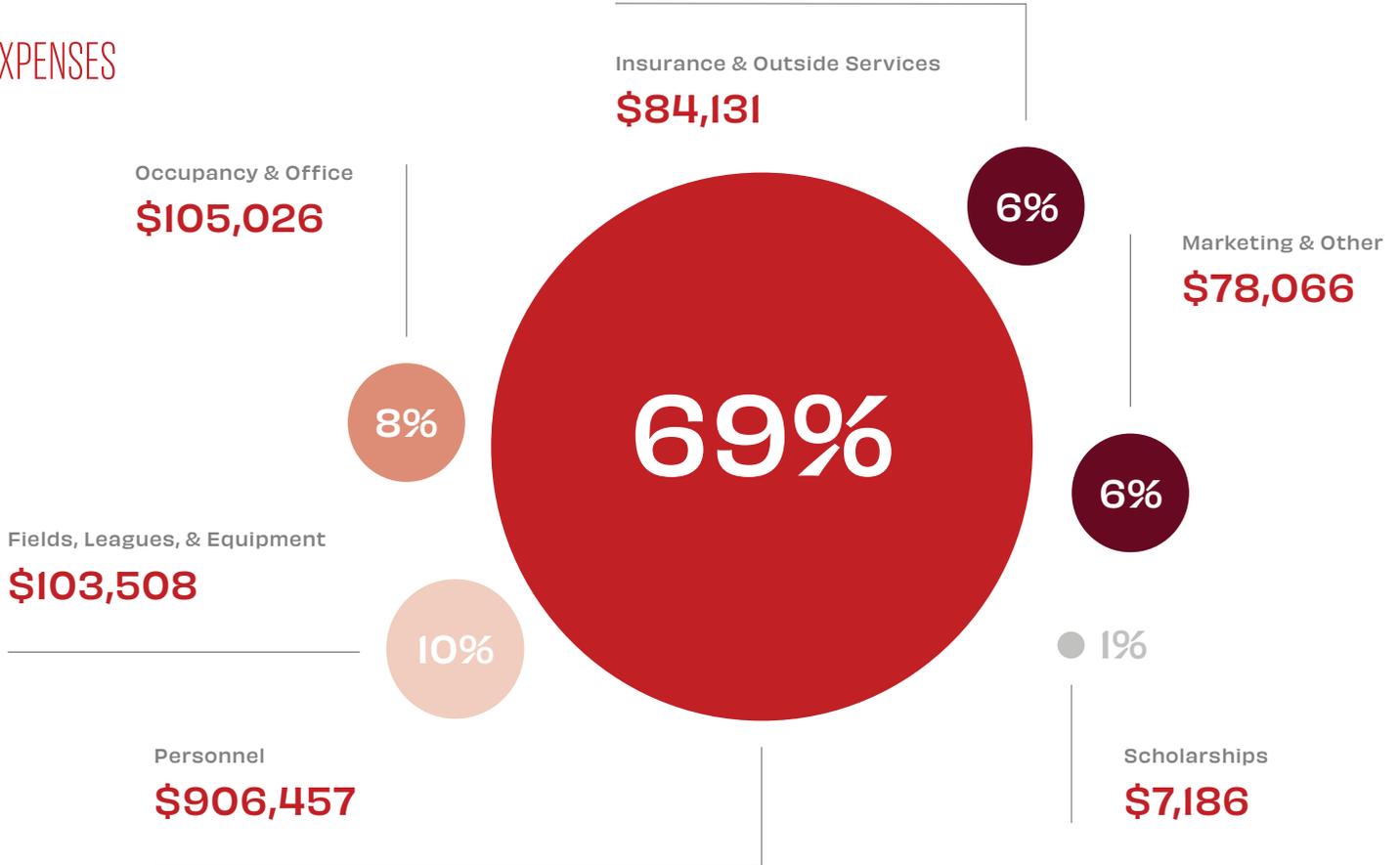
\$1,140,991

Other

\$907



EXPENSES



DONORS

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to those who have helped us positively impact underserved students and families.

Premier Donors

Jessica and Steve Sarowitz

\$25,000-\$74,999

Julian Grace Foundation

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Waukegan Police Association
Brad and Michelle Whitney
Lamarlo Williams
Vance Wyatt
The Xcel Group
Marcus Zagorniak
The Zeigler Family

\$1-\$99

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STAFF

Office Staff

Scott McLellan, Executive Director

Dean Smith, Sporting Director

Gary Potter, Director of Finance

Rena Lee, Director of Development and Marketing

Jennifer Ptak, Director of Operations

Thomas Cahue, Director of Team & Football Operations

Yanelly Villegas, Director of College and Career Readiness

Letisia Gutierrez, Director of Sporting Operations

Adrian Roman, Community Programs Manager

Adrian Nevarez, Marketing Manager

Mayrani Rios, Sporting Operations Coordinator

Coaching Staff

Omar Cruz

Briana Huetson

Omar Mendez

David Motley

Cesar Mujica

Frankie Pedrosa

Rob Kettle, College Soccer Recruitment Specialist

Academy Coaches

Adamariss Chavez

Carmen Reyes

Contact Us
Heart of the City

PO Box 356
Waukegan, IL 60079

847-623-6200
www.heartofthecitysports.org