



**HEART OF  
THE CITY**



# **IMPACT REPORT**

[WWW.HEARTOFTHECITYSPORTS.ORG](http://WWW.HEARTOFTHECITYSPORTS.ORG)

# From The Director

Dear Friends,

A few months ago, I left my role as the Director of Development and Marketing for Heart of the City and stepped into my new role as the Executive Director. For a year and a half, I had the privilege of working side by side with the former Executive Director of five years, Scott McLellan. Scott's long-term impact on Heart of the City and passion for the families we serve truly humbles me. His leadership and guidance as we navigated an unheard-of pandemic and its lengthy aftermath was critical to the developmental growth of this organization. Scott, we are grateful for your insight, enthusiasm, and dedication to the power of sport. I am deeply committed to continuing that work.

This past year, we spent a lot of time looking at our mission and thinking about the next chapter. What does Heart of the City mean to our student athletes and the community? How do we continue finding ways to remove barriers and create opportunities for youth to be more successful? How can we increase our capacity and grow our offerings to reach and impact more families in need?

Our completed three-year strategic plan is action focused with a vision that brings our programs to other parts of Lake County. Above all, we are dedicated to accessibility. Soccer should be a sport for all, no matter where you live, how much money you make, or what language you speak. So 2023 will see Heart of the City having a presence in new schools and towns to ensure just that: access. It will also see new partnerships formed around health and wellness that meet the physical and emotional needs of our families.

In interviews with our youth and parents for a video that we played at our first annual



Gala last year, one word stood out above all the rest: FAMILY. Heart of the City is a family. A family among our staff, coaches, and Board of Directors; a family among our partners and supporters; and most importantly, a family among our athletes, siblings, and parents. And as part of the family, we are dedicated to ensuring they have the best possible future they can have.

We are truly grateful to everyone who helped strengthen Heart of the City in 2022 through gifts of your time and resources. As we look ahead, we encourage you to join our family and partner with us in support of our programs. It is only through a shared mission to empower and uplift our communities that we all will be successful.

**Rena Lee**

Executive Director

# From The Board President

Dear Friends,

I want to start off by thanking our Heart of the City families for their support. I continue to see great growth of our soccer programs as we work together to establish pathways for our student athletes to be successful on and off the soccer field. I appreciate the enthusiasm and team spirit that you help foster in our players and in the community.

Next, I want to acknowledge the professional engagement and service of the staff of coaches and support executives. Your guidance and understanding are a testament to your talent, and we value your service. You are amazing role models, and you are making an impact every day by successfully leading the operations.

In addition, I want to recognize the Board of Directors for their leadership and strategic vision of the needs of the organization. Your compassion and empathy provide good decision making through mindful and purposeful conversations.

Finally, I thank our partner organizations, local businesses, community leaders, corporate sponsors, and foundational investors for your advocacy and for your continued commitment. Your direct support helps to provide a positive and nurturing environment where the sport of soccer and life

lessons that it teaches are allowed to flourish.

You all make up the heart of our programs. I am proud of the many accomplishments that took place in the past year: a first-year successful Gala event; a new health and wellness component to our youth development programming including a partnership with Rosalind Franklin University to assist our families with accessing physical care; new programming at the LEARN Charter schools, in Park City, and at Affirm Leadership Christian Academy; and four student athletes recruited to play college soccer. Through our collaborative efforts, we have helped to create a vibrant community that is a resource not only for our student athletes but also for their families. I can see the positive impact that your efforts have on the communities that we serve, and I am excited for the opportunities ahead.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Motley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" and last name "Motley" clearly distinguishable.

**David Motley**

President, Board of Directors

# BOARD MEMBERS

**David Motley** *President*

City of Waukegan

**Ann Carroll-Butler** *Vice President*

Attuned Care

**Daniel Coughlin** *Treasurer*

4SBay Partners LLC

**Maytee Diez** *Secretary*

LEARN 9 Charter School

**Gabriel Cruz**

Rodriguez Exterminating

**Esmeralda Gomez**

Zion Benton Township High School

**Victor Gonzalez**

Old National Bank

**Kimberly Krugman**

Old World Industries LLC

**Elyse Litwack**

4SBay Partners LLC

**Melville Nickerson**

NRG Energy

**Lupe Rodriguez**

Rosalind Franklin University

**Jesus Ruiz**

College of Lake County

**Jessica Sarowitz**

4SBay Partners LLC

**Rebeca Torres**

Medline Industries LP

**Vance Wyatt**

CVS Health

**Rena Lee**

Heart of the City Executive Director





# OUR VISION

Recreational and competitive soccer is the pathway to personal success.

# OUR MISSION

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



## LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD



While soccer is the most popular sport in the world, it is one of the least accessible for youth in the United States. Astronomical costs, racial and social inequities, and so many other barriers limit the opportunity for kids to benefit from playing youth sports. For Heart of the City, equity and access are our priority.

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. Recognizing that a four-year college experience is not for everyone, in 2020 we started diversifying our post-secondary readiness programming to expose youth to other viable post-secondary pathways, including trade schools and apprenticeships, the U.S. Armed Forces, and the U.S. Peace Corps and AmeriCorps.

Whether our student athletes are with us for a season or several, we want them to leave us better than when they came in, equipped with the tools they need for success. That is why we use a holistic approach to our programming that focuses on our student athletes' mental, physical, and social needs.



# OUR *Pathway*



3

## Health & Wellness

Healthy lifestyles are an important component for all kids. Our programs are proactive in improving lifestyle choices and emphasizing physical, mental, and emotional well-being:

- Nutrition guidance
- Mental health training and referrals
- Physical training



2

## Family Engagement

As kids are perfecting their skills as soccer players, our coaches and mentors are providing support and engagement for the whole family to flourish.

- Referrals to social service providers
- Family events
- Parent centered resources



1

## Soccer

Boys and girls ages 5-19 enter the pathway through one of our accessible soccer programs that emphasize positivity, inclusivity, and fun as well as on the field soccer skills.



4

## Leadership & Character Development

Self-awareness is vital so kids can realize their potential. Coaches and mentors prioritize a social-emotional learning curriculum that will help them thrive personally, professionally, and athletically.

- Teamwork exercises
- Mentoring and volunteering opportunities
- Coach and referee certification options



5



## Post-Secondary Success

Our programs include experiential learning opportunities that provide students the tools and resources to be successful beyond high school.

- College and career exploration field trips
- Financial aid and parent workshops
- College recruiting visits
- Academic support and study space



6



## Graduation!





**97%**

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

**73%**

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

**67%**

of families qualify for free or reduced lunch based on income

## OUR COMMUNITY

**29%**

of the population consider English as their second language

**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



# OUR STUDENTS

**34%** girls

**66%** boys

**56%**

Make less than  
\$40,000/year

**13%**

Kindergarten and  
Pre-K

**58%**

Elementary

**14%**

Middle School

**15%**

High School

**73%**

Hispanic / Latinx

**12%**

Black / African American

**7%**

White / Caucasian

**5%**

Other / Multi-racial

**1%**

Arab American /  
Middle Eastern

**1%**

Asian / Pacific Islander

**1%**

Native American

## GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS

**42%** Waukegan

**10%** North Chicago

**9%** Park City

**8%** Zion

**8%** Gurnee

**6%** Beach Park

**5%** Great Lakes

**4%** Wadsworth

**2%** Round Lake

**1%** Mundelein

# GRASSROOTS

## Grassroots Soccer Clinics

Introducing Soccer

218 youth • Ages 5-14

In partnership with local schools, park districts, and non-profit organizations, our free, after-school and summer clinics offer an introduction to soccer for families. This program is supervised by our Director of Coaching with support from the HOTC Elite professional coaches and high school players. Access to a safe, fun, positive outlet improves physical health, social skills, coordination, gross motor skills, communication, and teamwork.

## Clinics

LEARN Charter School Network

Park City

Affirm Leadership Christian Academy

Waukegan Park District



[heartofthecitysports.org/grassroots](http://heartofthecitysports.org/grassroots)



After the Covid pandemic, we had to close our Teen Center and the kids in our community lost a safe space to play. We were fortunate to have Heart of the City come in to fill that gap for our families. Their soccer and youth development programs have made a huge impact in the community. This is a perfect example of the way we work together to keep youth safe and out of mischief.”

**Mayor Steve Pannell** • Park City



# ACADEMY

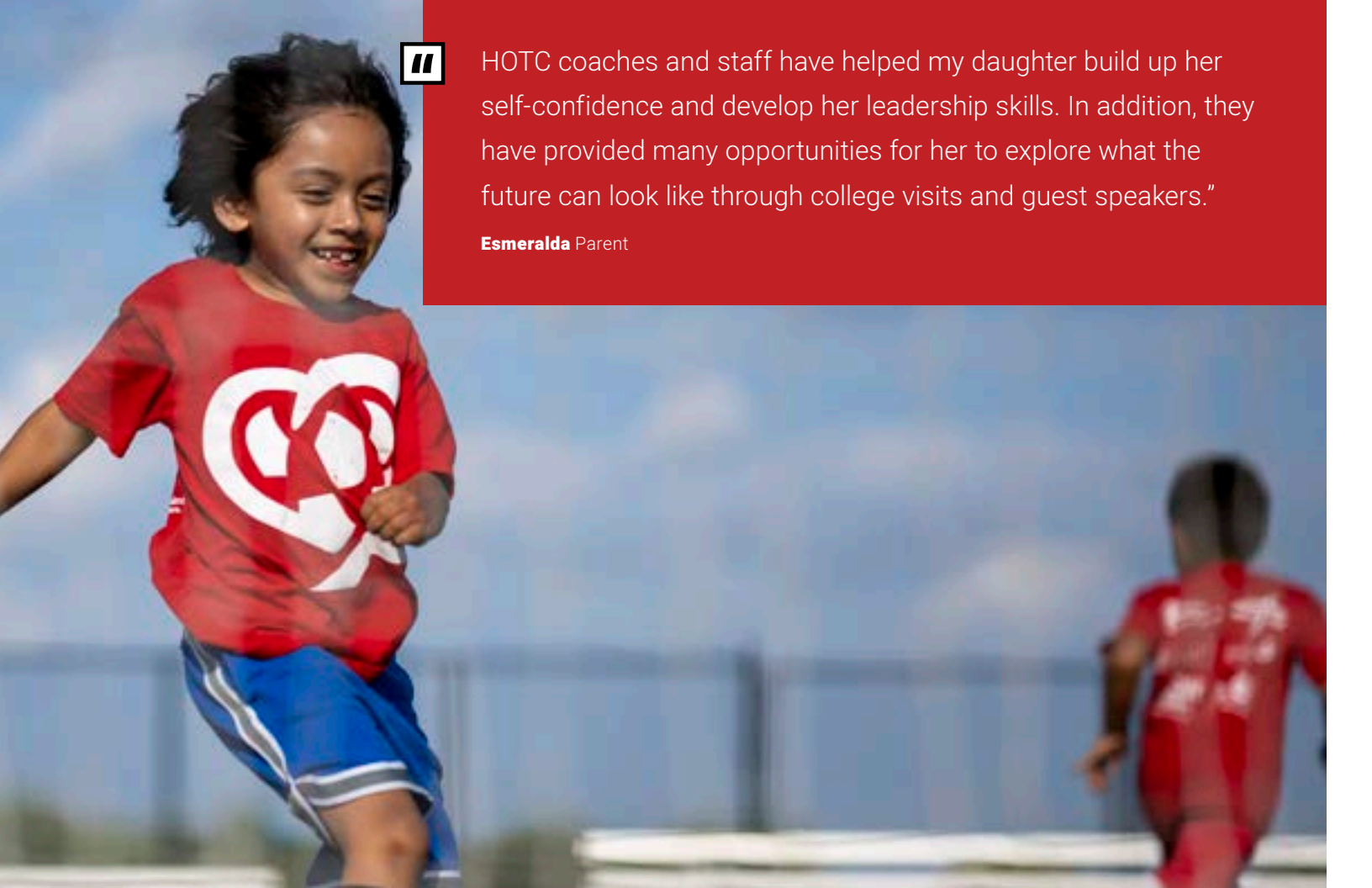
## Soccer Academy

Instilling the Big Picture

**196 youth • Ages 5-14**

As kids progress to our developmental in-house soccer program, they gain more opportunities to develop and improve their soccer abilities. The program exposes them to professional coaching staff that are committed to providing quality training. As participants of the program, students also gain important life skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, teamwork, conflict-resolution, and self-awareness. Access to coaches, mentors, and community resources keeps students on track in school and physically and emotionally healthy.





HOTC coaches and staff have helped my daughter build up her self-confidence and develop her leadership skills. In addition, they have provided many opportunities for her to explore what the future can look like through college visits and guest speakers."

**Esmeralda** Parent



# ELITE TRAVEL

**Elite**

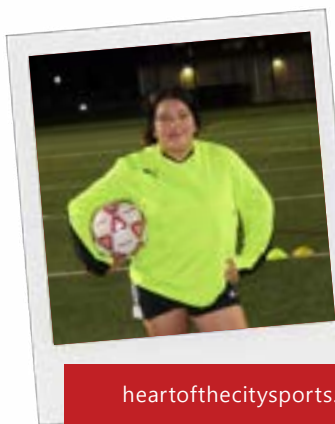
Preparing for Life After High School

**276 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.

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. The program seeks to increase access to collegiate and professional playing opportunities as a way of leveling the playing field in communities with less resources.



[heartofthecitysports.org/hotc-elite](http://heartofthecitysports.org/hotc-elite)

# COLLEGE SOCCER RECRUITMENT

As a part of our ELITE travel soccer program, athletes receive assistance with college soccer recruitment. Assistance with applications, facility tours of nearby universities, free entry into college ID and recruitment events, and creation of a highlight reel to send to coaches/recruiters are all ways in which ELITE members benefit from being a part of the program.

Heart of the City also hosts College ID Events which are open to any students in Lake County that are hoping to play in front of recruiters from a variety of nearby colleges. The events are also captured on video to share with coaches that were not present for the event.

High tech equipment, personalized marketing, and a team of college recruitment specialists are all tools which help to level the playing field for our athletes.





# YOUTH DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORT

The Youth Development and Support (YDS) Program positions our students to achieve postsecondary success. YDS utilizes a holistic approach that focuses on our student athletes' mental, physical, and social needs. The program strengthens students' communication, relationship building, and intrapersonal skills with the goal of positioning our student athletes to flourish after their high school graduation. Our goal is to help them achieve whatever post-secondary plans they wish to pursue. Programming is embedded within our soccer curriculum, and scheduled throughout the year to make visits, events, and workshops accessible to youth and families. Our program model centers key areas of development: health and wellness, post-secondary planning, collegiate soccer recruitment assistance, and parent/family engagement.

Supporting our student athletes also means supporting and engaging their families. This year we were excited to expand our offerings of parent specific events and family friendly activities.

**Our programming features a variety of strategies including:**

- Pre-practice programs
- Referrals to social service providers
- Individualized coaching
- Youth and family-friendly events
- College and Career exploration visits

[heartofthecitysports.org/education](http://heartofthecitysports.org/education)



# 9

## COLLEGE VISITS



# COLLEGES VISITED

College of Lake County  
Gateway Technical College  
North Central College  
Governor's State University  
University of Illinois Chicago

Alverno College  
University of Wisconsin (Milwaukee)  
Northern Illinois University  
Benedictine University

# HEALTH & WELLNESS PARTNERSHIPS

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The health and wellness of our student athletes is a priority area in our programming because these areas directly impact our students' ability to perform well on and off the field. This past year, through surveys and individual conversations with student athletes and their families, we identified a need to focus on key areas of health and wellness, including access to physical therapy and mental health. One of our key partnerships is with Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science (RFUMS) to offer free physical therapy, as well as coordinating visits from their Care Coach, which is a mobile health clinic offering a range of free services.

Aside from key partnerships, the new focus on health wellness includes developing programming on topics that promote personal wellbeing and healthy habits. Programs feature activities such as yoga, injury prevention exercises, and Wellness Days that feature several health focused community organizations.

## Partnerships

**Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science**

**Nicasa**







# ELITE MEDIA DAY



Over the past year, it has been our goal to capture more photos and video of our athletes to share with parents and to help record the journey of our student athletes as they go through the recruitment process. In the last year, we hosted two media days for our ELITE teams to capture everything from portraits to videos of them in action. Along with internal resources, we work with volunteer photographers and videographers to capture all the magic out on the field.



# JOIN US AS A VOLUNTEER

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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.

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**Contact** Dean Smith, Sporting Director [dean@heartofthecitysports.org](mailto:dean@heartofthecitysports.org)

## Youth Development and Support 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.

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**Contact** Yanelly Villegas, Director of Youth Development [yanelly@heartofthecitysports.org](mailto:yanelly@heartofthecitysports.org)

## Event Opportunities

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

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**Contact** Dulce Dominguez, Director of Development & Marketing [dulce@heartofthecitysports.org](mailto:dulce@heartofthecitysports.org)

# FIRST ANNUAL

## SOCCER TO SUCCESS

2022 — *Gala*

Amount Raised **\$117,553**

Thank you to our sponsors, donors, volunteers, board of directors, and staff for helping to make our inaugural gala at the Genesee Theatre a huge success!



Founders Award recipient, Jessica P. Sarowitz



Keynote Speaker Christina Fink, Ph.D.





## GRADUATING SENIORS

**Congratulations to  
these incredible young  
men and women!**

Jocelyn Anguiano  
Isabel Escalera  
Jessica Melgoza  
Carmen Reyes

Jacquelyn Morales  
Eric Frias  
Cesar Alvarez  
Marlene Bañales

# FINANCIALS

## SOURCES OF INCOME

Grants

**\$118,419**

8%

Program Fees

**\$167,122**

11%

Fundraising Events

**\$64,560**

4%

Contributions

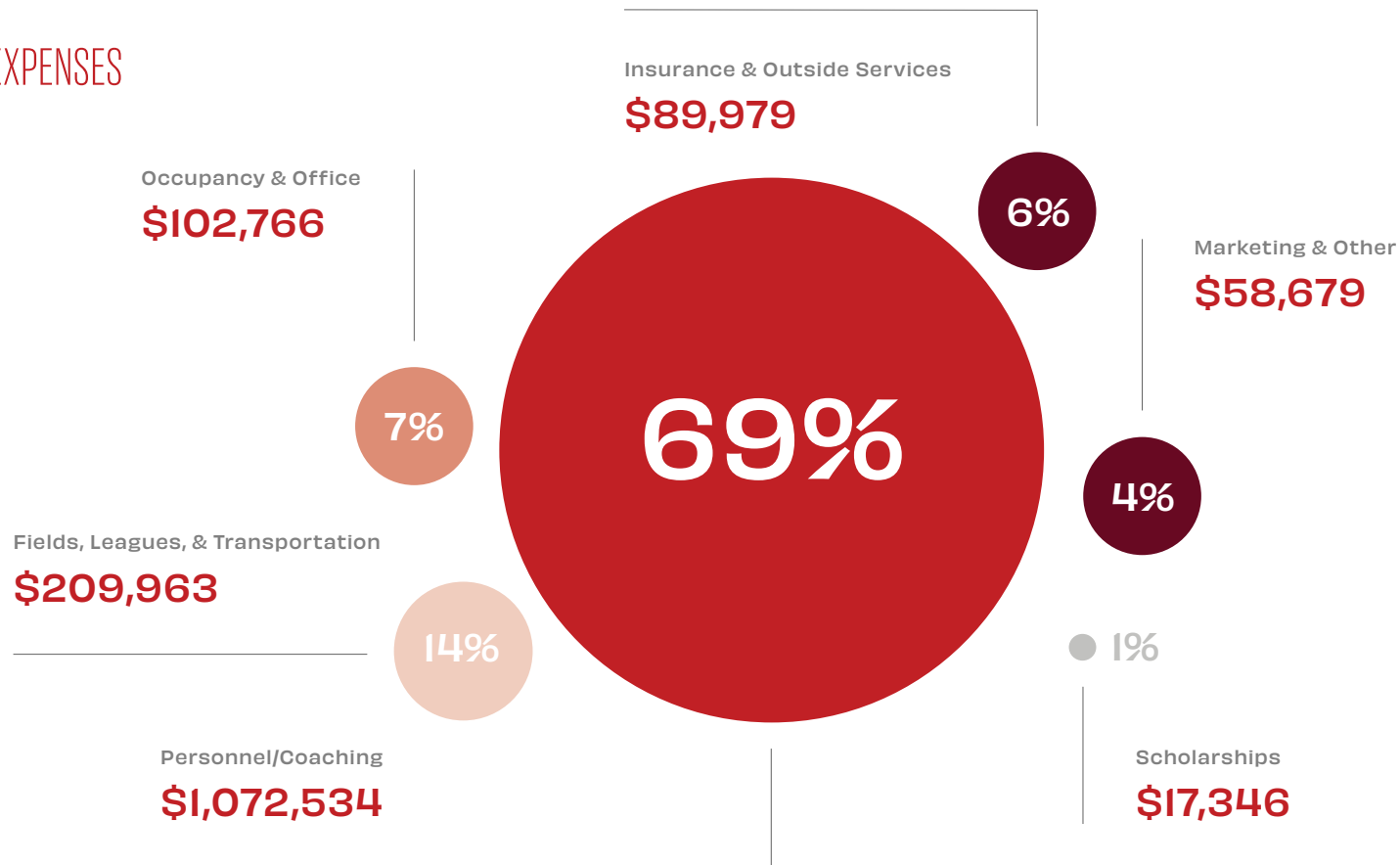
**\$1,190,203**

Other

**\$1,402**

**77%**

## 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-\$100,000

Healthcare Foundation of Northern Lake County  
Julian Grace Foundation  
Laureus Sport For Good Foundation

## \$10,000-\$24,999

Classic Toyota and Kia of Waukegan  
Guy A. and N. Kay Arboit Charitable Trust  
Medline Foundation

## \$5,000-\$9,999

Andrew and Alice Fischer Charitable Trust  
Ann and Jim Butler  
Diane and Douglas Myers  
New City Moving - Kathy and Brian Slater  
Lupe Rodriguez  
John G. Schreiber and Mrs. Kathleen A. Schreiber  
United Way of Lake County

## \$1,000-\$4,999

Baird Foundation, Inc.  
Baird – The Horan Marella Group  
College of Lake County - Grayslake Campus  
College of Lake County - Lakeshore Campus  
First Bank of Highland Park Foundation  
Friends of Holly Kim  
Nicole and Nate Gast  
GCM Construction LLC - Guy and Carol Hincker  
Christopher and Melissa Guerdan

Sarah Haag  
Lori Kleiman  
Lake County Sports Center and Entertainment  
Rena Lee  
Michael and Allison Marella  
Mary Beth and John McCarthy  
Kevin and Kristine McLellan  
Sarah and Scott McLellan  
Miraflores Films LLC  
Melville Nickerson  
Old National Bank  
Mike Pierce  
Gary Potter  
Rodriguez Exterminating - Gabriel and Raquel Cruz  
Rosalind Franklin University  
Sharon Rudnick  
Courtney Smith  
State Senator Adriane Johnson  
Waukegan Community Bank  
The Xcel Group  
Xcel Staffing

## \$500-\$999

160 Driving Academy  
Ameriprise Financial  
ARCC Consulting Corp  
Veronica Bate-Ambrus  
Dyannah Butler  
City of Waukegan  
Jeffrey Damaschke  
Maytee and Fredrick Diez  
Eliuth Duran

Floda Dyson  
Emeric Facility Services  
Express Employment Professionals  
Philip and Wendy Hinojosa  
Illinois Women's Soccer League  
Integrity Developers, Inc.  
Cheryl and Michael Kahn  
Preston Kendall  
Kimberly Krugman  
Leslie Leber  
Elyse Litwack  
Steve McCaughey  
Lauren and Ben McLellan  
Rocio Mena  
Patty Bueno  
NorthSide Community Bank Charitable Foundation  
Occasionally Lori Personal Chef  
Alyssa Pimentel  
Charlene Podolsky  
Real Invest Inc.  
Beth and Russell Smith  
Rebeca and Jose Torres  
Waukegan Park District  
Waukegan Tire  
Vance Wyatt

## \$100-\$499

American Outfitters Ltd.  
Anastasia's Restaurant and Sports Lounge  
Daniel and Lauren Anders  
Michael Anderson  
Anonymous

Donald Avery  
Bruce Boyd  
Rob Broms  
Tom and Dana Carris  
Esther Chagoya  
Gilbert Chavez  
Daniel Coughlin  
Armando Cruz  
Father Hernan Cuevas-Contreras  
Michael and Irene Edgar  
Judson Ely  
Exchange Club of Grayslake  
Exchange Club of Waukegan  
Mandel Feferman  
Jane Ferry  
Lynn Florian  
Joanna Fosco  
Fraternal Order of Police – Waukegan Lodge No. 5  
Sean Frisch  
Gaitan Properties  
Tynisha Gardner  
Alicia Giles  
Esmeralda Gomez  
Gregory Gomez  
Andrea Gordon  
Patrick Graham  
Green Town Tavern  
Dan Healy  
Tom Healy  
Andy and Maureen Helzer  
Debbie and John Hickey  
Christopher Hogstrom

Tish and Corey Hutchinson  
Todd Johnson  
Rosalinda Justiniano  
Libby King  
April Koot  
La Canoa  
Barbara LaFasto  
The Lake County Community Foundation  
Chrissy LaScala Geraghty  
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Kris McCoy  
Denise McCrummen  
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Lisa Meggs  
Sari Montgomery  
David and Dawn Motley  
Wayne Motley  
Audrey Nannenga  
Angelo and Myrna Negron  
Mike Nerheim  
Adrian Nevarez  
Jose Nevarez  
North Avenue Tap  
Dulce Ortiz  
Kathleen Parvis  
Sandy Pauly  
Cesille Price  
Jennifer Ptak  
Paul and Grace Ptak  
Record-A-Hit  
Robert W. Baird and Co. Inc.  
Gina Roberts  
Carlos Rosado  
John and Susan Schwab

Kendra Scott  
Juanita and Curtis Sellers  
Tina Sernett  
ServPro of Gurnee  
Maria Sievert  
Dave and Erin Smith  
Dean Smith  
Tinotenda Sora  
Loretta Sweeney  
The Taproom  
Mayor Ann and Wayne Taylor  
Matt Tessmann  
Wally and Diane Treu  
Anthony Vega  
Christopher Velez  
Ray Vukovich Consulting  
Carol Warrell  
Waukegan Chamber of Commerce  
Waukegan Park District  
Joseph Wert  
Gabrielle White  
Brad and Michelle Whitney  
Grant Whitney  
Colleen Wolak  
Mathew Yates  
Janice K Zagorniak  
Marcus Zagorniak  
Marjorie Zessar  
Marvin Zessar

### **\$1-\$99**

Carolina Abonce  
Josephina Alcalá  
Angelina Alfaro  
Anonymous  
Jacelyne Arismendi  
Ryan Bisceglia  
Kara Kalnitz

Nicole Borchers  
Julianne Brennan  
Thomas Cahue  
Delia Canongo  
Maureen Carmichael  
Kristin Carnes  
Lisa Carroll  
Kristin Carter  
Natalie Castillo  
Ceola Clark  
Denisse and Jose Davalos  
James and Denise Drake  
Jennifer Durkin  
Jennifer Evans  
Nelly Gallegos  
Alicia Garcia  
Cristina Gonzalez  
Victor Gonzalez  
Amy Grutzmacher  
Mindi Gubin  
Jill Hancock  
Jean Healy  
Deion Jackson  
Amy Jacobson  
Diane Jimenez  
Courtney Kelekian  
Robert Kopystynsky  
Susan Kopystynsky  
Christine Lansing  
Glen Larson  
Kathleen Lee  
Mary Rose Lila  
Omar and Rachel Lomeli  
Monica Lundeen  
Bryan Manzanarez  
Jose Mari  
Rufina Martinez  
Dorothy McCaffrey

Brian Mcrae  
Nancy Mendez  
Sandra Nevarez  
Jeff Oatsvall  
Jenny Orellana  
Twinkle Patel  
Carmen Patlan  
Stephanie Polson  
Lisa Potter  
Amy Radosevich  
Deanna Rae  
Michael Reed  
Yesenia Rios  
Leonardo Rivera  
Jocelyn Rodriguez  
Karina Rodriguez  
Lorena Rodriguez  
Norma Rodriguez  
Rosie Romero  
Angie Santillan  
Susan Schendl  
Lauren Skluzacek  
Megan Taylor  
Jessica Trejo  
Jessica Trevino  
Carla Vargas  
Keith Verisario  
Breytel Villafan  
Diana Villegas  
Isela Villegas  
Katherine Waldrop  
Linda White  
Andrea Whatsitt  
Seth Wolkoff  
Jamie Yebra  
Aldonna Zelvis  
Zumbier Brewery

# STAFF

## Office Staff

**Rena Lee**, Executive Director

**Dean Smith**, Sporting Director

**Gary Potter**, Director of Finance

**Dulce Dominguez**, Director of Development and Marketing

**Jennifer Ptak**, Director of Operations

**Thomas Cahue**, Director of Team & Football Operations

**Yanelly Villegas**, Director of Youth Development

**Letisia Gutierrez**, Director of Sporting Operations

**Adrian Roman**, Community Programs Manager

**Audrey Nannenga**, Development & Grants Manager

**Elizabeth Contreras**, Sporting Operations Coordinator

**Adrian Nevarez**, Marketing Manager

**Natasha Kopystynsky**, Wellness & Community Engagement Coordinator

**Nicole Borchers**, Administrative Manager

## Coaching Staff

**Omar Abonce**

**Eleni Agelopoulos**

**Jesus Ayala**

**Omar Mendez**

**David Motley**

**Cesar Mujica**

**Ayse Oztas**

**Frankie Rueda**

**Rob Kettle**, College Soccer Recruitment Specialist

## Academy Coaches

Jocy Anguiano, Marlene Banales, Adamariss Chavez, Amairani Hernandez, Robert Lach, Tristan Torres Madrid, Jacquelyn Morales, Carmen Reyes, Mariana Tejada

## Coaches in Training

**Isaac Rivera Lopez**

**Alex Mendez**

Contact Us  
Heart of the City

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Waukegan, IL 60079

847-623-6200  
[www.heartofthecitysports.org](http://www.heartofthecitysports.org)