



## **Fields Are Key to Our Children's Future**

At a time when a lack of physical activity and soaring rates of childhood obesity have contributed to a major public-health crisis, DC Stoddert Soccer is proud to carry on its 31-year tradition of making its soccer programs available to all who want to play, regardless of athletic ability, ethnicity, or their family's financial situation. However, the organization has faced increasing financial challenges in obtaining access to and maintaining fields, and in meeting a growing number of requests for scholarships. Help us continue to provide a high-quality soccer experience to thousands of youngsters and donate to our new Fields Fund or Scholarship Program.

### **Fields**

DC Stoddert Soccer has traditionally utilized public facilities for our recreational and travel games. This has required nominal permit fees, funding for periodic field maintenance projects, and some small stipends for school facilities on the approximately 20 different field locations we use in the District of Columbia and the nearby Maryland suburbs.

However, after three decades of expansion, we find it next to impossible to find enough fields for the approximately 180 recreational and travel games that take place every weekend in season, never mind the countless team practices and increasing number of clinics. Nor is DC Stoddert alone. Soccer in general has exploded as a recreational activity in our urban environment, and other sports also must find places to play.

So we've had to look beyond the traditional model of relying on inexpensive public facilities in order to find space that was both safe and actively maintained to competitive standards in Washington's high-use, difficult environment. (That includes rainy springs and dry summers and falls.) Several years ago, we were forced to move many of our "home" travel games to the Maryland SoccerPlex at a substantial cost. We have also funded major work on local fields, and are now working with the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to identify and support significant future projects at several additional fields. This past summer, as an initial step in that effort, we funded a \$23,000 renovation at the Fort Stevens Recreational Center.

In addition, we have obtained some access, at a fair price, to fields at several area private schools and universities. And thanks to your advocacy, we also have been granted access to several new, taxpayer-funded DC Public Schools' synthetic fields.— but again at a price. We also are actively searching for partners for full-scale artificial-surface projects to support the high use that we require.

## **Scholarships**

DC Stoddert Soccer provides scholarships to allow hundreds of needy kids play both recreational and travel soccer. However, as costs rise and our community outreach expands, the strains on our scholarship program have increased.

In recreational soccer, fees cover the costs of uniforms, access to fields, dues for registration and insurance for each player through the Virginia Youth Soccer Association (VYSA), equipment (goals, nets, line paint, corner flags, balls, etc.), referees, the costs of our small staff, support for the Jelleff Boys and Girls Club (DC Stoddert Soccer's offices are located at the club and all registered players become members), and support for the nonprofit DC Scores. Although DC Stoddert relies heavily on volunteers, our annual operating costs remain significant and those costs are funded entirely from registration fees.

The recreational fees also support our longstanding honor system of providing a scholarship by waiving fees for all players who ask for a scholarship. Last year, this accounted for more than \$ 37,000 in scholarships for more than 250 recreational players.

The costs are even more significant for travel soccer — which includes the expense of professional coaches, uniforms, league fees, high-quality fields such as the Maryland SoccerPlex for older teams, and other items. Absent our aggressive commitment to scholarships, the costs for travel soccer might be out of reach for many worthy young players.

The number of travel players on scholarships has increased each year. In the 2006-2007 season, DC Stoddert Soccer granted 53 full and 4 partial scholarships, at a total cost of \$52,000. For the 2007-2008 season, we project that the club will grant more than 65 full scholarships and 7 partial scholarships, at a cost of more than \$72,000. These scholarships traditionally have covered the \$665 per season DC Stoddert fees, but not the cost of uniforms, winter clinics, tournaments, and other team expenses. Therefore, we have also initiated a pilot program to make some scholarship funds available to our travel teams with significant numbers of scholarship players to help offset some of these additional expenses. This year, DC Stoddert spent over \$6,000 in supporting these scholarship players beyond the figures noted above.

With your help, DC Stoddert can continue its proud tradition of providing a high-quality soccer experience to every child who wants to play.

For more information and to donate, follow this link:  
[http://stoddert.com/donationsandsponsorships/index\\_E.html](http://stoddert.com/donationsandsponsorships/index_E.html)