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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **HPARD Receives \$50,000 Grant For Soccer for Success Program**

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department will kick up some fun in the New Year, thanks to a \$50,000 grant award from the United States Soccer Foundation to expand after-school soccer play opportunities for local children.

**Soccer For Success** is a collaboration between the Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD), the Houston Dynamo and Dynamo Charities, Houston Independent School District (HISD), the U.S. Soccer Foundation, and area sponsors to offer Houston area students the opportunity to take part in an organized after-school recreational soccer program at no charge.

In 2006, the Greater Houston Transportation Company (Taxis Fiesta and Yellow Cab) reached out to HPARD with the concept of utilizing middle school field space after school to help fill the gaps of available soccer field play areas for children. As a result, Taxis Fiesta/Yellow Cab funded and HPARD implemented a unique after-school soccer initiative for children at McReynolds, Fleming, and E.O. Smith Middle Schools. The soccer program made significant impacts at these schools, and shortly thereafter, Minute Maid became interested in the concept and contributed additional funding to offer Soccer After School at three middle schools in southwest Houston.

Today's Soccer for Success partnership is an extension of the Taxis Fiesta/Yellow Cab concept. Soccer for Success aims to get kids back on a positive path by encouraging them to stay in school and by fostering stronger connections between teachers and peers. HPARD provides expertise in organizing leagues, mobilizing and training support staff, and implementing recreational programming for children.

### **HPARD Receives \$50,000 Grant, cont.**

With the continued support of these founding partners, the U.S. Soccer Foundation's support and Houston Dynamo involvement, HPARD served 586 school children in the launch of Soccer for Success this past fall at fifteen HISD schools. Recruitment for Soccer for Success was targeted at students taking part in an after-school tutoring or homework assistance program at the following middle schools: Burbank, Fleming, Holland, Fonville, Patrick Henry, Hogg, Key, Marshall, McReynolds, and M.C. Williams. Soccer for Success was also piloted at the elementary school level, including students from Nat Q. Henderson, Scott, Thompson, and Bruce Elementary Schools. The program helps children learn the fundamentals of soccer play, and allows them to take part in beneficial physical activity in a safe and supervised environment.

Soccer for Success is offered twice a week at each school site. As the program gains momentum, more teachers are expressing a desire to collaborate and become Soccer for Success instructors, which is the ideal formula. Teachers are already on site and have formed a bond with the students. Their involvement as Soccer for Success instructors contributes to a seamless transition for students into the soccer program at the end of the school day. Currently, four schools have teachers implementing the Soccer for Success program. At these schools, the teachers are reporting that they have already begun observing positive changes in the students' behavior.

Children may register for Soccer for Success beginning January 5, 2010, at the schools listed above. In addition, program registration is opening at another eight schools, including Woodson, Thomas, and Cullen Middle Schools and Briscoe, De Zavala, Martinez, Scroggins, and Tijerina Elementary Schools. Children will take the field in February 2010.

Soccer for Success is funded in part by a \$50,000 grant from the U.S. Soccer Foundation, with matching funds and in-kind support from the following sponsors: Taxis Fiesta/Yellow Cab, the Garth Brooks Teammates for Kids Foundation, BMC Software, HEB, MAS Club, and Minute Maid. This program would not be possible without the generous support of the U.S. Soccer Foundation, our sponsors, and collaborators.

## **HPARD Receives \$50,000 Grant, cont.**

For more information on Soccer for Success or the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, call (832) 395-7022 or visit [www.houstonparks.org](http://www.houstonparks.org).

### **Soccer for Success HISD Roster**

#### Middle Schools

Burbank  
Cullen \*  
Fleming  
Fonville  
Henry  
Holland  
Hogg  
Key  
Marshall  
McReynolds  
M.C. Williams  
Thomas \*  
Woodson \*

#### Elementary Schools

Briscoe \*  
Bruce  
De Zavala \*  
Nat Q. Henderson  
Martinez \*  
Scott  
Scroggins \*  
Thompson  
Tijerina \*

\*New Soccer for Success target schools in 2010