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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Houston Parks and Recreation Department Receives Grant for Soccer for Success Program *Program Addresses Children's Health Issues and Juvenile Delinquency***

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) has received a two-year grant from the U.S. Soccer Foundation (U.S.S.F.) to continue to offer the Soccer for Success program to 1,000 children ages 6 – 14 at 13 schools and area parks. The grant provides \$142,500 for Fiscal Years 2015 and 2016 each, supplemented by City of Houston general funds of \$137,000 and Houston Parks Board funds of \$5,500 each fiscal year. Soccer for Success is offered to students as a free, sports-based youth development program that uses soccer as a tool to improve the health and behavioral outcomes for children in underserved urban communities.

"Soccer for Success is an innovative program that has been proven to have a positive impact on youth in underserved communities," said Ed Foster-Simeon, president and C.E.O. of the U.S. Soccer Foundation. "We are committed to using our game to help children develop healthy, active lifestyles, build character, and strengthen life skills that provide the foundation for productive and successful lives."

"We have had Soccer for Success as an important part of our programs for youth since 2009," said Joe Turner, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. "We appreciate the interest taken by the U.S. Soccer Foundation in improving the lives of young Houstonians through good nutrition and sports."

The program provides after school activities to participants three times per week throughout the school year. The children enjoy soccer and nutrition education to improve their overall health by increasing strength, agility, and endurance, and through improved dietary practices that may last a lifetime. They benefit by having a safe after school environment within which they can avoid gang activity, and access to mentors who help them develop important life skills.

The U.S. Soccer Foundation is the major charitable arm of soccer in the United States. Soccer for Success is a partnership program between H.P.A.R.D., U.S.S.F., the Houston Dynamo and Dynamo Charities, and the Houston Independent School District (H.I.S.D.).

*The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages over 37,851 acres of parkland and greenspace for the City of Houston and develops and implements recreational programming for citizens of all abilities. For more information on the Houston Parks and Recreation Department and its golf programs, call (832) 395-7022 or visit [www.houstonparks.org](http://www.houstonparks.org).*

