

WHY VOLUNTEER? (4/30/12 3:00 p.m.)

United Soccer Alliance of Indiana needs volunteers to help support the many activities in which it is involved. From the perspective of the parent, the purpose of all these activities may not always be clear. Having once been a parent new to organized soccer, I know it is not always easy to understand either the scope of the program or the reasons things are done the way they are.

The explosion of youth soccer in America over the past 25 years has been reflected in Indianapolis and in the surrounding area. Each year, United Soccer Alliance of Indiana serves over 2500 players, from 4 year olds in Soccer Tots to 19 year olds in Travel. These active participants reflect a wide range of abilities and interest. USAi's goal is to provide a level of play that is appropriate for every player so they will have an enjoyable experience and perhaps develop a lifelong habit of healthy physical activity, if not develop a lifelong love of the Game.

To meet that goal, we need a large number of players at many levels of development. In USAi Rec u5-u12 division, for example, at least four, and preferably twice as many, teams are needed in each age and gender to avoid the boredom of playing the same teams over and over. The more teams there are, the more fun it is. Similarly, for Travel soccer, the goal is to have enough players so that each team has players of approximately equal development, instead of a wide range of development. The Travel Strategic Plan calls for the Club to form at least two teams for each age and gender as soon as possible. (And grow to three after that.) With several different teams at different levels of play available to each player, we will better serve all the players.

United Soccer Alliance of Indiana, a not for profit organization, desires to serve every player in the area, from the beginner to the elite player. As the number of players served has grown year after year, we have come closer to achieving these goals, but we are not yet there. We need to develop more outreach programs to introduce more children to this wonderful game, not only because we think it would be a positive experience for them, but also to better serve those children who are already playing soccer. The more players there are, the greater the likelihood that your child will play on a team most suited to his or her developmental level.

It takes thousands of hours of work to provide the organization necessary for your officially sanctioned soccer player to step onto a properly prepared and safe field and play at an expected time and place, in a nice uniform, with goals and nets, with referees, with appropriate adult supervision, playing at a developmentally appropriate level, having received the highest quality of appropriate training available. Volunteers perform almost all of the work.

We currently have an Executive Director, Technical Director of Coaching, Director of Operations, and several part-time administrators and field coordinators. Talented and dedicated Travel Technical Coaches, Directors of Coaching, and coaches are paid a small stipend. They give much of their time and energy for less pay than they likely could get elsewhere. USAi will continue to retain and attract quality coaches.

Everything else is done by volunteers. Every time your child steps out onto a soccer field, he or she is there because literally hundreds of busy people just like you dedicated some time to make it possible. All that is United Soccer Alliance of Indiana and Travel simply cannot happen without a lot of volunteer help.

Please volunteer. We need you.

Thomas Geisse

Executive Director

United Soccer Alliance of Indiana