



*Soccer for Success*  
*Buffalo*  
Coach-Mentor  
Handbook



This and all Associate New Hire documents can be found [here](#).

Soccer for Success is the U.S. Soccer Foundation’s out-of-school time program proven to help children establish healthy habits and develop critical life skills. Led by trained coach-mentors, the program teaches soccer and healthy lifestyles in a fun and safe environment where students can thrive. The U.S. Soccer Foundation has partnered with the Independent Health Foundation to operate Soccer for Success throughout Western New York.

### Soccer for Success Has Five Main Components



**Physical Activity** - The program provides children with the opportunity to learn the sport of soccer in a supportive environment, while also getting the recommended 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity during each session.

**Mentorship** - Staff are trained as coach-mentors who not only teach children soccer, but also serve as role models by helping participants build confidence and recognize the value of hard work, teamwork, and persistence in achieving personal goals



**Safe Spaces** - The program provides spaces that are physically and emotionally safe for students.

**Community Engagement** - The program connects families to resources and provides them with information to help them live healthy lifestyles and nurture their child’s personal growth.



**Health & Wellness** - Children learn how to stay healthy in body and mind with fun and engaging activities.



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## Important Contact Information

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### **Independent Health Foundation, Soccer for Success Admin Team**

(Referred to throughout this handbook as Program Directors)

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Manager, Community Initiatives

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716-602-1593

General Program Oversight

Budget and Legal

Timecards and Payroll

Policies and Procedures

Kelsi Maciejewski

Supervisor, Foundation

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716-491-9012

Site Managers & Coach-Mentors Oversight

Timecards and Payroll

Coach-Mentor Recruitment and Training

Curriculum Integrity



## Pay Day and Recording Hours Worked

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You will be paid bi-weekly for work performed during the previous pay period. The work week begins on Monday and ends on Sunday. You will clock in and out on the Sling app at the start and end of your shift. The IHF admin team will download the timesheets from Sling on Friday morning of payroll week and assume you will work any outstanding shifts not yet tracked. Any adjustments will be made as soon as possible. You will receive a summary of hours' works from the Payroll Team at Independent Health. Please bring any discrepancies to Jen Mitri to adjust in the following paycheck.

## Time Off Requests

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An absence is considered scheduled when a time off request is submitted at least 48 hours in advance of the scheduled shift and approved. An absence is considered unscheduled when a time off request is submitted less than 48 hours before a scheduled shift. All requests must be submitted through the Sling App. A tutorial is posted in Sling outlining the procedure. Coaches are responsible for making their Site Manager aware of their scheduled absence upon approval.

Time-off requests will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis for each practice group. A substitute coach-mentor at an equal or greater coaching level must cover your shift for your request to be accepted. If no one can cover your shift, your request may be denied, except in instances of legally protected absences. This includes all federal, state or local laws and may include but are not limited to military leave, jury duty, voting leave, domestic violence leave, NY Sick, NY Paid Family Leave, FMLA and is subject to eligibility).

Coaches must reference their protected leave at the time of reporting their absence. Coaches should refer to the Independent Health Associate Handbook for further details on protected leave time.

A *No call/no show* is the complete failure on the coach's part to notify the company of their inability to work a scheduled work time. If an associate is absent for one or more consecutive shifts without properly notifying IHF administration and their site manager, the associate is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Two consecutive shifts of no-call/no-show may result in immediate termination of employment.

## Tardiness

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All scheduled staff are expected to arrive at the site and be in the play space at the start of their scheduled shift. Arriving to a scheduled shift more than 5 minutes late will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.



## Mobile Curriculum/Learning Lab

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The mobile curriculum is located in the [Learning Lab](https://ussoccerfoundation.myabsorb.com/#/login), located at website:  
<https://ussoccerfoundation.myabsorb.com/#/login>

Log in with your username and password, select the appropriate level for your assigned group.

## Coaches as Role Models

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Please come to practice dressed in appropriate athletic attire, preferably a provided *Soccer for Success* shirt and your provided name tag. No spaghetti strap tank tops, or short shorts.

Remember that you are a role model and should only be bringing water to drink, no sugary beverages, or coffee. If you need to bring a snack for yourself, please consume it before you arrive at the play space.

Please be aware of Park rules:

- All parks close at sunset and open at sunrise.
- Dogs and cats must be securely controlled, leashed and excrement removed.
- Glass containers are prohibited.
- Smoking is prohibited.
- No firearms or fireworks allowed.
- Sales, solicitations, signs and displays are strictly prohibited without a permit.
- Vehicles must be parked in designated areas only; no driving or parking is allowed on grass or park pathways.
- Deposit trash in designated receptacles only; please help us to prevent illegal dumping and littering and keep your park clean!

Although the parks allow dogs, please do not bring your pet with you while you are coaching.



## Weather Policy

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If the temperature is below 32°F or higher than 105°F, games and practices will be postponed or cancelled. Cancellations and postponements due to snow/rain will be made no later than 30 minutes before the game/practice is scheduled.

Typically, practice will take place rain or shine; however, in the event of thunder or lightning we are required to take a 30-minute pause until lightning subsides in which case we will likely cancel practice for the safety of the players.

It is up to the Site Manager to cancel practice in the event of inclement weather and inform your families and all site staff through Remind.

## Child Safety

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Independent Health Foundation is committed to the protection of children and recognizes the equal rights of all children regardless of age, race, gender, religion, disability, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national orientation or other status or belief.

### Dismissal Procedure (K-2's)

- Players will be released from the field to their adult.
- No player should walk to the parking lot without their adult.
- Adults will receive a Remind message at 7:10 each day that players will be dismissed in 5 minutes.

### Safe Environment Policy

- All staff members are responsible for ensuring that the space in which the children are playing is safe from gym equipment, traffic, dangerous debris and strangers.
- All staff members are responsible for ensuring that miscellaneous gym equipment is removed and/or contained.

### Safe Equipment Policy

- All staff members are responsible for ensuring that balls being used during practice and games are fully inflated. If a ball is not fully inflated it should not be used during practice and should be re-inflated as soon as possible.
- All staff members are responsible for ensuring that children are wearing their shin guards at every practice and scrimmage day. The Site Manager can determine if players without proper equipment are allowed to participate, depending on the activity.



## Background Check Procedures

Potential staff members will be required to complete an online authorization form confirming his or her acknowledgement and consent to a criminal background check to be conducted by the U.S. Soccer Foundation through its authorized professional reporting agency (the “Agency”).

- A. Failure to provide a fully completed background check form will prevent the U.S. Soccer Foundation’s authorized Agency from completing the check, and the potential staff member will not be considered eligible to serve as a staff member.
- B. Upon receipt of the completed electronic background check consent form, the authorized Agency will perform the background check and compare the results of the background screening reports to
- C. the U.S. Soccer Foundation’s established criteria. The Agency will then determine if the potential staff member meets the minimum standards for the *Soccer for Success* program.
- D. The Agency shall notify the potential staff member and the U.S. Soccer Foundation of the result of the background screening on a pass/fail basis. If a potential staff member is disqualified, the U.S. Soccer Foundation will notify the Independent Health Foundation and the Agency shall provide the potential staff member with details as to why a disqualification was issued. The U.S. Soccer Foundation will not be privy to any details associated with such disqualifications.
- E. If a potential staff member feels a mistake has been reported in their criminal background check, it is the potential staff member’s responsibility to contact the reporting Agency directly to resolve any issues. The U.S. Soccer Foundation is not responsible for errors or omissions that may be reported on background checks.

## Abuse Prevention Training for Staff and Volunteers

All staff members are required to understand and complete Abuse Prevention Training through the Learning Lab prior to coaching, and every two years for renewal.

## Staff Behavior Toward Children

- A. All staff members shall recognize that it is their duty to protect children from physical, sexual, and emotional/psychological abuse for which they are responsible to the best of their abilities regardless of age, race, gender, religion, disability, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national orientation etc. while they are in the *Soccer for Success* program.
- B. At no time will a staff member use any kind of sexual abuse, emotional/psychological abuse (including, but not limited to teasing and making fun) or physical abuse (including, but not limited to hitting, kicking, punching, slapping or spanking) of *Soccer for Success* participants who are exhibiting poor behavior.





- C. **Observable and Interruptible:** All staff members shall ensure any kind of engagement with *Soccer for Success* participants including group and individual coaching, mentoring, family engagement events, community engagement events and all other events associated with the *Soccer for Success*

program occur in an environment that is both observable and interruptible. At no time should one staff member be alone with *Soccer for Success* participants in an area that is not easily observed and in a situation that is not freely interruptible.

- D. **One-Adult/One-Child Policy:** At no time is there a situation in which one-adult and one-child are alone together. We recognize that there are certain situations that will arise where abiding by the one-adult/one-child policy will be challenging. Below are examples of these situations and ways in which staff members can meet these challenges:

o **Bathroom and Water Breaks –**

**Indoor programming:** Staff members will take the entire team in for water breaks.

Children are not to be left unattended on the field or sent somewhere alone. After a drill, take the whole team for a water and/or bathroom break. If during the event a break is needed, *Soccer for Success* staff members must make every effort to take children to the bathroom in groups of three or more. When possible two *Soccer for Success* staff members will accompany the group of children to the bathroom or water fountain/cooler, and at least two staff members will continue to run the *Soccer for Success* program or

event. As a reminder, it is always a good idea to take all players to the restroom prior to the session starting.

**Outdoor programming:** Have the player find their adult to take them to the restroom if they are not capable of going by themselves. If they can use the restroom alone, the port-o-let should be within your line of sight.

- o **Child's transportation arrives after all other participants have departed –** At least two staff members should wait until the last child's transportation (including public transportation directly from the *Soccer for Success* site) arrives.

- o **One-on-One Mentoring –** Mentorship is a vital component of the *Soccer for Success* program, and the Independent Health Foundation recognizes the many benefits that children receive from such mentorship. When such mentorship occurs by *Soccer for Success* staff members, it must occur in a setting that is both observable and interruptible, such as talking with a participant about other issues (grades, etc.). Staff members are not permitted to have private communication with a player through direct text messaging, or social media, or be "friends" with a player on social media.

## Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect

Though it can be difficult to recognize when a child is being abused, there are signs each *Soccer for Success* program must watch for. Below is a list of 10 common signs of abuse in school-age children and adolescents, some of which you might not witness but could hear about:

1. **Unexplained Injuries-** Visible signs of physical abuse may include unexplained burns or bruises in the shape of objects. An unconvincing explanation of a child's injury is also evidence.
2. **Changes in Behavior-** Abuse can lead to many changes in a child's behavior. Abused children often appear scared, anxious, depressed, withdrawn, and/or more aggressive.



3. **Returning to Earlier Behaviors-** Abused children may display behaviors shown at earlier ages, such as thumb sucking, bed-wetting, fear of the dark, and/or fear of strangers. For some children, even loss of acquired language or memory problems may be an issue.
4. **Fear of Going Home-** Abused children may express apprehension or anxiety about leaving school or about going places with the person who is abusing them.
5. **Change in Eating-** The stress, fear, and anxiety caused by abuse can lead to changes in a child's eating behaviors, which may result in weight gain or weight loss.
6. **Change in Sleeping-** Abused children may have frequent nightmares or have difficulty falling asleep and, as a result, may appear tired or fatigued.
7. **Changes in School Performance and Attendance-** Abused children may have difficulty concentrating in school or have excessive absences, sometimes due to adults trying to hide the children's injuries from authorities.
8. **Lack of Personal Care or Hygiene-** Abused and neglected children may appear uncared for. They may present as consistently dirty and have severe body odor, or they may lack sufficient clothing for the weather.
9. **Risk-Taking Behaviors-** Young people who are being abused may engage in high-risk activities such as using drugs or alcohol or carrying a weapon.
10. **Inappropriate Sexual Behaviors-** Children who have been sexually abused may exhibit overly sexualized behavior or use explicitly sexual language.

## Process for Reporting Abuse

All *Soccer for Success* staff members must report any child abuse or neglect. For contact information and legal definitions of child abuse specific to each state, visit the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services website: [https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/reslist/rl\\_dsp.cfm?rs\\_id=5&rate\\_chno=11-11172](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/reslist/rl_dsp.cfm?rs_id=5&rate_chno=11-11172)

### STEPS TO REPORTING AN ABUSE SITUATION

The Report Abuse Response Team is comprised of the Program Directors, which include Jen Mitri and Kelsi Maciejewski. Information about the reported abuse will be restricted to a need-to-know basis and will only include the Response Team, the reporter, and the investigative agency.

1. If you suspect that a child you know is in immediate danger, call 911 immediately.
2. If you suspect physical, sexual, or emotional/psychological abuse of one of their *Soccer for Success* participants:
  - You are required to immediately report that suspicion to the Program Directors who will then immediately report to proper authorities.
  - You are always permitted to report directly to the proper authorities if you do not feel comfortable discussing with the Program Directors.
  - If the suspect is a staff member, the Report Abuse Response Team will inform the U.S. Soccer Foundation and the staff member will be immediately suspended for the duration of the investigation, the alleged perpetrator shall be re-screened by the U.S. Soccer Foundation



in accordance with Part II of the U.S. Soccer Foundation's *Soccer for Success* Child Protection Policy.

3. During and after the close of the investigation, the Response Team shall report back to the person who made the initial report to ensure that a report of physical, sexual or emotional/psychological abuse does not get buried by a single individual or group of individuals within the organization who are either engaging in abuse or are engaging in overprotection of the organization or individuals at the expense of a child's safety.

## Active Shooter Protocol

### RUN: Evacuate If Possible

- If there is considerable distance between you and the gunfire/armed person, quickly move away from the sound of the gunfire/armed person. If the gunfire/armed person is in your building and it is safe to do so, run out of the building and move far away until you are in a secure place to hide.
- Leave equipment and your belongings behind.
- Keep your hands visible to law enforcement.
- Take others with you, but do not stay behind because others will not go.
- Call 911 when it is safe to do so. Do not assume that someone else has reported the incident. The information that you can provide law enforcement may be critical, e.g. number of shooters, physical description and identification, number and type(s) of weapons, and location of the shooter.

### HIDE: Hide silently in as safe a place as possible

- If the shooter is in proximity and you cannot evacuate safely, hide in an area out of the armed person's view.
- Choose a hiding place with thicker walls and fewer windows, if possible.
- Lock doors and barricade with furniture, if possible.
- Turn off lights
- Silence phones and turn off other electronics.
- Close windows, shades and blinds, and avoid being seen from outside the room, if possible.
- If you are outdoors and cannot RUN safely, find a place to hide that will provide protection from gunfire such as a brick wall, large trees or buildings.
- Remain in place until you receive directions from law enforcement.

### FIGHT: Take action to disrupt or incapacitate the shooter

- As a last resort, fight. If you cannot evacuate or hide safely and only when your life is in imminent danger, take action.
- Attempt to incapacitate or disrupt the actions of the shooter.
- Act with physical aggression toward the shooter.
- Use items in your area such as fire extinguishers or chairs.
- Throw items at the shooter if possible.
- Call 911 when it is safe to do so.



Immediately after an incident:

- Wait for Local Law Enforcement officers to assist you out of the building, if inside.
- When law enforcement arrives, everyone must display empty hands with open palms.

## General Injury Protocol

If an injury occurs, notify the child's parent/guardian. The Site Manager or Coach-Mentor must complete an incident report form, using the scannable QR code located in the Site Bin and pinned in Sling. Notify your Site Manager if they are not present. Be aware of potential concussions, heat stroke, heat exhaustion, dehydration, and concussion. If any of these are suspected, notify the child's parent/guardian immediately.

## Heat and Hydration

### Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. It occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature: the body's temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down. Body temperature may rise to 106° F or higher within 10-15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

#### Signs May Include:

- an extremely high body temperature (above 103° F)
- red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
- rapid, strong pulse
- throbbing headache
- dizziness
- nausea
- confusion
- unconsciousness

#### Actions to Take

If someone is experiencing these symptoms, it may be a life-threatening emergency.

- Call for immediate medical assistance while cooling the victim.
- Move him/her to a shady area and cool rapidly, using whatever methods you can:
  - spray the victim with cool water from a garden hose or water bottle.
  - sponge the person with cool water.
- Monitor the body temperature and continue cooling efforts until the body temperature drops. If emergency medical personnel are delayed, call the hospital emergency room for further instructions.

### Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids.



**Signs May Include:** heaving; sweating; paleness; muscle cramps; tiredness; weakness; dizziness; headache; nausea or vomiting; and/or fainting.

#### **Actions to Take**

The following steps can be taken to cool the body during heat exhaustion: drink cool water; rest; take a cool shower or bath; seek an air-conditioned environment; wear lightweight clothing.

### Heat Cramps

Heat cramps are muscle pains or spasms—usually in the abdomen, arms, or legs that may occur in association with strenuous activity. People who sweat a lot during strenuous activity are prone to heat cramps. This sweating depletes the body's salt and moisture, causing painful cramps. Heat cramps may also be a symptom of heat exhaustion.

#### **Actions to Take**

If medical attention is not necessary, take the following steps: stop all activity and sit in a cool place; drink clear juice or a sports beverage; do not return to strenuous activity for a few hours after the cramps subside because further exertion may lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke; seek medical attention for heat cramps if they do not subside in one hour.

### Dehydration

Dehydration occurs when too many fluids are lost from the body. Sweating is the main cause of water loss leading to dehydration.

**Signs May Include:** decreased performance; dizziness; dry mouth; extreme fatigue; headaches; irritability; muscle cramping; and/or thirst.

#### **Actions to Take**

To prevent dehydration: drink water 30 minutes before each session, encourage mandatory fluid breaks every 15-20 minutes, and drink fluids after physical activity. The suggested fluid intake for an 88-pound child is five ounces every 20 minutes; for a 132-pound adolescent, nine ounces should be consumed every 20 minutes.

### Concussion

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury—or TBI—caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth.

**Signs May Include:** headache, dizziness, blurred vision, difficulty thinking clearly, sensitivity to noise and light.

#### **Actions to Take**

If you think a player has a concussion, remove them from play and contact their adult. A player should only return to play with permission from an appropriate health care professional.



## Site Bin

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### **SITE BIN CONTENTS**

The Site Manager will be responsible for ensuring the bin is on site. It will include the following:

- Incident Report QR code
- AED, first aid kit, and icepacks
- Garbage bags and disposable gloves (outdoors only)
- Ball pump with ball needles

### **SITE BIN PROTOCOL**

- All staff are to review the contents of the Site Bin.
- The Site Bin should be on site during all practices.

## Player Attendance

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### **PROCEDURES FOR DOCUMENTING ATTENDANCE**

1. All appropriate team members will receive an electronic link to input daily attendance.

### **PROCEDURES FOR REPLACEMENT DUE TO EXCESSIVE ABSENCES**

1. If a child is placed on a team but has not attended practices, it is the Site Manager's responsibility to contact the child's family to discuss the absences.
2. If the child continues to miss practice or is no longer interested in the program, it is the Program Director's responsibility to contact that child's guardian and inform him or her that the child is being removed from the team.
3. Once the guardian has been notified, the Program Director will contact the next available child's guardian from the waitlist from web sign-ups.

### **PROCEDURES FOR REMOVAL DUE TO BEHAVIOR**

If a child is misbehaving, the Coach-Mentor and/or Site Manager should bring it to the attention of the child's Guardian. The Site Manager should also bring any behavior concerns to the Program Directors.

1. A child may only be removed for behavioral problems if all other options have been exhausted or if there are concerns that their behavior will lead to the physical or emotional injury of the player or of another player.
2. Warnings should be given to children who may still have a chance to develop with the program.
3. Before a child is removed because of behavior, Program Directors must give final approval.



## Equipment

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### EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTION AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES

1. At the start of the season, Site Managers will be provided with equipment for each of their teams.
2. Site Managers are responsible for returning the equipment at the end of each season to the storage unit.
3. In the first few weeks of practice, balls, jerseys and shin guards will be distributed.
4. Balls will stay on site at indoor locations.
5. For outdoors, each child is responsible for bringing their ball and shin guards to every practice.

## Play Space Policy

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These policies and procedures define a registered player, and outlines limitations of non-players within the site play space.

### Registered Player

- A player is truly registered when all paperwork has been completed and received by the Program Directors.
- Once completed paperwork is received by the Program Director, the child is then added to the site roster. At that time, they are considered a registered player, and are eligible to participate in sessions.

### Non-Registered Child:

- Children that have not turned in **completed** paperwork are considered Non-Registered and **are not permitted to participate in sessions**.
- Children that are not registered in *Soccer for Success* but are enrolled in the after-school activities taking place at the site, are **not permitted** to participate in sessions at any point. These children are not covered by our liability insurance and should be not in the play space during the times allotted for the *Soccer for Success* program.

## Coach Evaluations

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In order to ensure we are properly implementing the *Soccer for Success* program, the Site Managers are required to evaluate coach-mentors periodically.

### COACHES: RECEIVING EVALUATIONS

1. Coach-mentors are to coach as if they are being evaluated daily.
2. Coach-mentors are expected to handle constructive criticism with respect and professionalism.
3. Coach-mentors are expected to work with Site Managers to implement any necessary improvements immediately. Evaluations determine the ability to stay in the current coaching position.



## Communication

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### WITHIN YOUR SITE

#### Administration:

- Site Managers are the liaison between all parties (Coach-Mentors, School Administration for indoors, and Program Directors).

#### Parent/Guardian:

- All staff members are responsible for communicating with parents/guardians of the children on their team on an as needed basis in a clear, consistent, professional and compassionate manner.

### PROGRAM DIRECTORS

- Program Directors are committed to an open-door policy of communication. At any time, Site Managers or Coach-Mentors may contact Program Directors with concerns or questions via email at [soccerforsuccessbuffalo@gmail.com](mailto:soccerforsuccessbuffalo@gmail.com)
- For immediate concerns or emergencies, coach-mentors should contact Site Managers. Site Managers should then contact Program Directors and/or School Administrators if the circumstance deems all parties to be notified.

### PARTNERS, COMMUNITY AND MEDIA

- All official communications, such as press releases, partnership opportunities, social media, blogs, newsletters, and updates will come from Program Directors.
- Site Managers, and Coach-Mentors are asked to share success stories including behavior or attitude changes, fitness or skill set improvements, a newfound appreciation to overall physical health and nutrition, etc. by emailing the Program Directors.
- Site Managers are encouraged to ask about student's behavior or successes outside of programming as well.
- Any stories Program Directors receive may be published on social media sites or shared with program partners. Any requests to remain anonymous will be respected.