

Sports Connection – getting kids involved in something positive



By Amy Jackson

Sports Connection is a successful link to at-risk kids.

This grassroots prevention program was created in response to the many kids in South Lake Tahoe who are not participating in sports due to lack of finances, transportation and language barriers.

Sports Connection's very reason for being is to help reduce teen pregnancies and gang involvement. How? By giving these at-risk kids a new sense of belonging, positive role models and a new found sense of confidence.

We're proud that Sports Connection has become successful, yet its work is never done.

Local kids are identified by school officials, neighbors and friends. Sponsors include community members and service organizations. Kids and sponsors are then "connected" and signed up for activities. We then determine if there are equipment or transportation needs. Often, coaches or other team parents become the true support and mentor for the child.

Once "connected" with a child, you will remain this child's sponsor through their middle school years. By keeping their academics high, Sports Connection kids will be

able to participate in these programs free of charge in high school.

Experience in their early years will give them the ability and confidence to attempt this. This will also help them define themselves in a positive way in their critical teen years.

Sports Connection currently has over 100 kids participating in AYSO Soccer, club soccer, Pop Warner Football, basketball, dance, baseball, snowboarding, theater and art.

Sports Connection is completely funded by sponsors and 100 percent of the donations are invested in these kids. Since we continue to receive more referrals, we're always looking for new sponsors. A child can participate in most seasonal sports for a just \$50.

To sponsor a child for a year, the investment is closer to \$150, depending on how many sports they play and at what level. The idea is to keep kids busy and involved all year, lessening the chances for any negative outside influences to take hold.

Want to invest in a child today?

Please mail your check to:

Sports Connection

557 Koru Street

South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

It's an investment that pays dividends daily.

Amy Jackson is the coordinator for Sports Connection.