Super Soccer Stars Spotlight, Power of Youth, and More!

Spotlight
Jennifer Simon, Westchester Regional Manager, Super Soccer Stars

Jennifer Simon started working in the afterschool field in 2001. She was a young college student at the time and had the amazing opportunity to help build a music and dance program from the ground up with the City of Orlando's Cultural Arts Division. Jennifer said, "It was that experience that cemented my love for expanded learning."

Jennifer told us that growing up, her family did not have a lot of money. She added, "My mother worked so hard to give us the things we needed, but we rarely had the money for afterschool programs or extracurricular activities." So when Jennifer started working with the City of Orlando, she realized there was a wealth of resources out there for families that were like hers. Jennifer stated, "I knew I could make a difference and help connect families with these programs. Now, I am able to reach thousands of children throughout New York with Super Soccer Stars."

Jennifer is the Regional Manager for Super Soccer Stars in Westchester, Fairfield, and Bergen Counties. They have two branches, for-profit and non-profit, which allow them to partner with schools, parks, and other expanded learning programs to provide well-trained, certified, and experienced coaches with a range of flexible pricing options. Jennifer asserted that this flexibility, along with their creative curriculum, allows them to reach children of all backgrounds and build programs specifically to meet the needs of individual communities.

Jennifer believes "these programs give children the opportunity for social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth. Children are exposed to
cultures and skills they may not otherwise have had the chance to explore. These experiences build well-rounded children that grow into creative and thoughtful citizens - strengthening our communities and driving innovation.”

When asked what her favorite part of her job is, Jennifer responded, “I love building relationships with our community partners.” Super Soccer Stars has almost 100 partners in Westchester County, and each of them serves their community in different ways. Jennifer added that “having a big picture view of all the good that is being done across the region is the greatest perk of my job and gives me great hope for the future.”

Jennifer also shared that Super Soccer Stars is eager to grow and reach more communities. You can find out more about their programs here. If you are interested in being a partner or bringing Super Soccer Star’s programs to your community, you can reach Jennifer at jennifer.simon@supersoccerstars.com.

Quality Self-Assessment Tool (QSA), Third Edition

The recently updated Quality Self-Assessment (QSA) Tool, Third Edition included a few brand new indicators. Let’s take a deeper look at one.

Administration & Organization
"A quality program has well-developed systems and sound fiscal management to support and enhance programming and activities for all participants."

Checklist J
“Has a clear policy for inclusion of all youth, including those with diverse abilities.”

Tip for Success
This is a checklist item, which is a new format in the revised edition and is like an indicator, but is ranked as either having the item (checked) or not having the item (unchecked) rather than across a scale of performance levels 1-4.

To determine if your program meets this checklist item, you would need to find out if the program has a policy for inclusion of all youth, including those with diverse abilities, and if that policy is clear. If you do have one, and you feel it is shared and followed effectively, you can check the box and move on. If not, here are two resources to help you get started with your new inclusion policy.

To learn more about what you can do to run an inclusive afterschool program, see Including All Students: Frequently Asked Questions About Including Students with Disabilities in Afterschool and Summer Programs. This FAQ was developed by the Network for Youth Success with the help of the New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, the New York State Disabilities Advocacy Association and Network, and other experts on inclusion practices. Check out pages 4 and 5 for more organizations with resources and program models to consider.

This Inclusion Toolkit by the Special Needs Inclusion Project contains many resources to help afterschool programs understand inclusion and effectively include students with diverse abilities, including sample inclusion policies on page 43.
The Power of Youth Challenge
Encourage Young People to Bring Positive Change to their Communities Through Service

The Power of Youth Challenge invites youth to bring positive change to their community by leading a local service project. They can make a difference and develop skills to use now and in the future.

Opportunities to serve are not equally distributed. Many young people do not have the time or resources to volunteer. Join in the efforts to help young people identify challenges that are relevant to their lives and implement solutions through their own service. This challenge is committed to empowering more young people to have the support they need to be agents of change and create opportunities to do good in the community.

Spread the word to young people who need and deserve an opportunity to lead through service.

America’s Promise Alliance, Peace First, and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation are partnering to create opportunities for more young people to be agents of change in their local communities.

Upcoming Events

3/15-3/18: National AfterSchool Association Convention, New York, NY
Join our community for four days of networking, learning, and inspiration. For more information, follow this link. If you are attending, join the Network for Youth Success for a New York State Meet-Up with networking and raffle prizes on Friday, March 15th at 8:30pm. Advance registration is required.

3/16: Terra Science and Engineering Fair, Syracuse, NY
Whether you want to explore Cassini's adventures around Saturn, test water quality in a local creek, or design an app to prep for your next exam, the Terra Northeast Regional Science & Engineering Fair (TNRSEF) enables you to ask questions and find answers! Students in grades 6-12 can come to SUNY Geneseo in March to celebrate all s/he has learned and perhaps even earn an award. More information can be found here.

3/18: Multiplying Good with Students In Action, New York, NY
Currently active in 13 communities across the U.S., Students In Action (SIA) is a unique youth volunteer leadership training and recognition program that supports, trains, and empowers today's youth to be leaders, problem solvers, entrepreneurs, and impactful global citizens. Register here!

4/4-4/6: NYAEYC Annual Conference, Verona, NY
This conference will host two full days of workshops, exhibitors, and keynote speakers for early care professionals. Visit their website for more information and how to register.

4/13: Long Island School Age Child Care Conference, Melville, NY
This professional development opportunity includes a selection of diverse presenters who will share their expertise of tools and strategies to establish and support social and emotional development in school age children. Keynote speaker Justin Shaifer, kicks off the day with a dive into the 'culturally responsive STEM curriculum.' The conference will be open to 150 registered child care providers who will receive 6 hours of OCFS training for attending. Click here more information and how to register.

School’s Out, Make it Count!
2019 Annual Conference

5/10-5/11: Network for Youth Success Annual Conference, Saratoga Springs, NY
Back by popular demand for one more year in Saratoga Springs! The New York State Network for Youth Success is holding its Annual Conference May 10 & 11! Come attend New York’s only statewide conference for Afterschool, Summer, and Expanded Learning Professionals. This conference brings together over 200 professionals to participate in two full days of workshops on topics ranging from SEL to Leadership. Follow this link to register today!

6/1: Smart Coos’ National Bilingual Bee & Biliteracy Competition, Brooklyn, NY
Early bird registration is now open for Smart Coos’ First Annual National Bilingual Bee & Biliteracy Competition. This event aims to bring 250+ bilingual student participants, ages 6-15, together. The competition will assess children’s proficiency in English along with one of these languages: Mandarin Chinese, French, Spanish, or Haitian Creole. If there are students who would like to participate or educators who would like to volunteer/judge, please email Mirta at mirta@smartcoos.com

6/12 & 6/19: Building Your Bounce Professional Development Learning Series Webinar
This two part train-the-trainer webinar experience provides participants with a copy of the Building Your Bounce Professional Development Learning Series, a three-part digital training tool that includes recorded videos that cover topics including, "Examining Our Own Risk and Protective Factors," "What Resilience Means to Me," and "Introduction to the Devereux Adult Resilience Survey - 23 Questions That Can Change the Way You Look at Life." Trainers and coaches will learn to use this innovative, digital tool to promote adult wellness in a variety of settings, including staff meetings, in-service trainings and parent workshops. Join Nefertiti and learn how you can create an overall culture of resilience. Register here. (Registration closes June 5).

8/4-8/10: Mindfulness Training for Educators, Lake Placid, NY
This weeklong program set in the idyllic environment of a lakeside retreat in the Adirondacks explores teaching for the 21st century. Participants will learn mindfulness practices, meditation, the neuroscience of learning, the nature of mind, and how to cultivate their inner resources. Each day will include experiential learning, as well as a cognitive element – and afternoons will be free to enjoy the many outdoor activities available to us, or to simply relax and read a book. Learn how mindfulness might benefit you in your role as an educator, and re-connect with the ideals that brought you into this field from the start! Click here for more information and how to register.

Follow Us!