

Soccer-playing Scout achieves goal

Written by SARAH McCRAW

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<http://www.ozaukeeexpress.com/images/021413/soccerSM.png> **Port High kicker Tyler Grisar's Eagle Scout project allows him to share his love of the game with young people who might not otherwise be able to play**

The perfect Eagle Scout project for 15-year-old Tyler Grisar of Saukville started at his feet.

Grisar is a sophomore at Port Washington High School, a Boy Scout with Troop 875 in Port Washington and a member of the North Shore United Soccer Club.

For his project, Grisar has developed a branch of The Outreach Program for Soccer — or TOPSoccer — a program that encourages people with physical or mental disabilities to learn and play the game.



In 2011, Grisar volunteered with a TOPSoccer program in Waukesha through the Wisconsin Youth Soccer Association.

“I just thought it was helpful and nice to work with the kids who weren't able to do what I could do,” Grisar said that experience inspired him to bring TOPSoccer to the North Shore conference area.

He has organized two TOPSoccer camps at 1 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 24, and Sunday, March 10, at Cedarburg High School.

Following the two camps, the North Shore United Soccer Club will take over running the program, while Grisar will continue to volunteer at events.

“He just has vision and he's been putting it together,” his father David said. “Anybody who knows Tyler knows that he's serious about soccer.”

Since August, Grisar has raised about \$1,300 and collected soccer balls, T-shirts, backpacks and water bottle donations from area businesses.

Grisar said the project has been a huge undertaking, especially trying to figure out the organizations in the community he needed to speak with to launch TOPSoccer.

“It was really hard to make connections and get permission from so many different people and places to do it,” he said. “Getting support and having people help out has been one of the easiest parts.”

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Nearly 30 volunteers, mostly from the North Shore United Soccer Club and the Port High boys' soccer team, are helping with the camps.

It's no surprise to Mike Bultman, Port's boys' soccer coach, that several teammates are lending a hand.

"I think the kids that are helping are phenomenal, well-grounded, well-rooted. It's fantastic to see the kids step up and do something like this," Bultman said. "It's the joy of being able to get out and experience something they haven't. On both sides of it, the kids are participating as players and as coaches."

Bultman, who has a younger brother with a physical disability, said the opportunities offered by the TOPSoccer program are special.

"When everything is so go, go, go and physical you almost forget about the kids who are handicapped and how they'd like to get into it, also," Bultman said. "This is one thing that is going to continue to manifest and grow. It's going to help out numerous kids."

So far, about 20 people have signed up for the camps, which allow people with disabilities between the ages of 5 and 25 to participate.

The camps will last about 90 minutes each, during which a scrimmage will be held.

"People in wheelchairs can be pushed and let the wheelchair hit the soccer ball like they're kicking it. Or they can throw the ball back and forth and do throw-ins and goalie pitch stuff," Grisar said.

Grisar plays defensive midfielder and sweeper for the Port boys' soccer team.

He received honorable mention last season in All-North Shore Conference coaches voting.

"We're very proud of him. I think this project blew up, in a way. We thought it would be a nice little thing to do and it's gotten so big," Grisar's mother Laura said. "I'm hoping now that we have it in Ozaukee County it will stay and more people will participate just to see the effect it has on both sides."

Mrs. Grisar, who also played soccer in high school, said she is thrilled that her son is sharing his love of the sport with others who might not otherwise be able to play the game.

Even though Grisar can't lead the program forever, he's happy to leave an impact in the soccer community in Ozaukee County.

"It makes me feel good because my Eagle Scout project is so different and it helped so many people," Grisar said. "It makes me feel good that somebody else can enjoy what I can enjoy."

There is no cost to participate in the camps.

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Image Information: JUGGLING A BALL, Port Washington High School soccer player Tyler Grisar (center) stood with teammates (from left) Brett Grisar, Jude Pargulski, Eric Drenitz, Tyler Shultis, Azariah Pargulski, Ethan Heinecke and Jamison Soya, who are helping him run a TOPSoccer program for young people with disabilities.

Photo by Sam Arendt