

Nations United Soccer keeps youth active and connected to the community in Boise, Idaho

This is Afterschool



Program Profile

Nations United Soccer

In 2016, two 8th graders expressed their desire to be on a soccer team to their school librarian, Mary Karol Taylor, at South Jr. High School in Boise, Idaho. She promised to help them get onto a team, and within a day, 20 more students asked to join. This led to the creation of a new program: Nations United Soccer.

Nations United Soccer is an afterschool program that gives youth access to fun, healthy activities and a local soccer community that they may not have otherwise participated in. The program serves more than 100 underserved refugee and immigrant students between the ages of 6 and 18. They play with hundreds of other soccer players and their parents, allowing them to be a part of the Boise soccer community, which gives them the opportunity to keep active and stay connected to the Boise community.

Nations United Soccer connects soccer, education, and community to help youth learn the skills necessary to succeed academically and successfully engage in the Boise community.

A typical day for Nations United Soccer students

A typical day for a Nations United player can look very different for each student, but all participants exercise in a fun environment at least three days a week.

Nations United typically has four full teams of players. Thanks to Boise Parks and Recreation, these teams are transported to the fields on game days on a bus. The players arrive at the fields 45 minutes before the start of the games to warm up, and coaches meet the players at the fields with balls, pinnies, and cones. While their opponents' sidelines are packed with cheering parents, Nations United sidelines do not have parents since most of their parents are at work. However, often there are teachers and other school staff there to support their students.

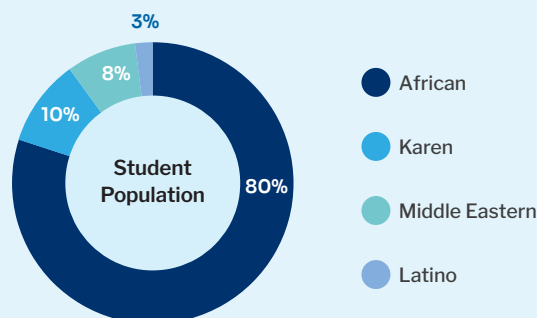
Some Nations United supported players are not on a full Nations United team, but rather integrated on to a team with other kids. Nations United volunteers help facilitate this match, introducing the student to the team and supporting them throughout the season as they attend practices and games. Players who are placed on the highest-level competitive teams travel to tournaments out of state at least once each season.

Taylor and Matt Trejo, co-directors of the program, are supported by committed coaches and volunteers who are deeply invested in helping the youth they coach.

Nations United Soccer | Boise, Idaho

6-10 Ages Served

>100 Participating Students



Connecting with the local community:

The majority of students in the program are Boise residents



Their goal is to help students:

- **Succeed academically.** Nations United emphasizes the importance of academics and good grades. Asking for help and maintaining open communication are encouraged. At the beginning of the year, the players sign a contract agreeing to good academic and behavioral performance in school. This ensures that the players are not only focusing on their physical health with the sport, but also their emotional and academic health.
- **Learn life and social skills,** such as dependability and perseverance, as well as developing confidence and teamwork skills, both on and off the field.
- **Live healthy.** Nations United encourages students to eat nutritious meals and to get enough sleep to improve their athletic abilities and performance on the field.
- **Give back to the Boise community.** Volunteering in the community encourages students' self-development and introduces new perspectives, especially important for students new to the U.S.

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